



THE SACTA VIEW ON HEALTH AND SAFETY OF MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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Mobile phones are currently used by some two billion people in 148 countries across the globe. In South Africa, they are used by half the population and the number of users is growing daily. Since the introduction of commercial cellular telecommunications in 1992, mobile telephones have become indispensable tools of communication by people of all ages and in every area of life.

As with all new technologies and innovation, there are some health and safety concerns in regard to mobile phones and masts. These have arisen largely because of the electromagnetic frequency emissions of these and a host of other everyday devices, including televisions, microwave ovens and so on.

There have been numerous studies on health and safety aspects of masts and mobile phones. Comprehensive overviews of these by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the UK's Stewart Commission note that with normal use there is no conclusive evidence that masts or mobile phones cause health problems. The WHO is currently engaged in a large-scale study to review the evidence and evaluate more recent research findings. It is anticipated that this stage should be available in within 12 to 18 months.

However, governments worldwide have adopted comprehensive safety guidelines governing exposure to electronic emissions. Mobile phones and cellular networks are designed to operate within these stringent limits. The most commonly endorsed guidelines are those developed by the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). These were accepted by the European Commission in July 1999 and the UK Government in May 2000 and are also endorsed and recommended by the WHO.

In South Africa the Department of Health supports the use of the ICNIRP guidelines as recommended by the WHO, and local telecommunications suppliers and networks, comprising the SACTA membership, all comply with the ICNIRP guidelines.

In an area often rife with misinformation, SACTA is committed to the highest standards of health and safety, and to researching and presenting facts to the public, in a manner that is both accessible and understandable.

Guided by international standards and relevant global best practice, SACTA works closely with manufacturers and operators to monitor developments and to share knowledge and information both in the industry and with the public.

As a representative industry organisation SACTA is committed to working closely with government to ensure the most appropriate balance between regulation and the availability of the technologies that are now such a crucial part of everyday life and commerce.

“Health and safety is a priority for SACTA. SACTA’s members are committed to the most stringent monitoring and measurement of their products and processes and to dealing rapidly and openly with public concerns,” states Lovina Nunan, Chairperson of SACTA.

ABOUT SACTA:

- SACTA is an independent non-profit association representing the mobile cellular public switched and fixed mobile telecommunications industry within South Africa.
- More information and contact details can be obtained from www.sacta.co.za.