



RESPONSE FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN CELLULAR TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION (“SACTA”)

Health and safety aspects of Mobile telecommunications:

SACTA recognises the prime importance of all health, education and technology issues related to the use of mobile phones, as well as the need for presentation of factual information on these issues in an easily accessible form for the public. SACTA is committed to ensuring the continued safety of the public.

SACTA’s Chairman, Mr. Du Plessis, said: “Governments worldwide have adopted comprehensive international safety guidelines governing exposure to electromagnetic emissions, including emissions from mobile phones and cellular networks. Mobile phones and cellular networks, in areas of public access, are generally designed to operate within these stringent limits.”

The most commonly endorsed safety guidelines for all emissions throughout the electromagnetic spectrum, including those pertaining to mobile phones and cellular networks, were developed by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection, otherwise known as ICNIRP. The ICNIRP guidelines were internationally endorsed by the European Commission in July 1999 and subsequently by the UK government in May 2000. The World Health Organisation (WHO) also advocates the use of ICNIRP as a suitable safety standard for exposure to electromagnetic emissions.

Locally the Department of Health has also supported the use of the ICNIRP guidelines and with this in mind, and in accordance with “international best practice”, local suppliers and networks are striving towards adherence to the ICNIRP guidelines.

The electromagnetic waves specific to mobile technology, that is RADIOFREQUENCY EMISSIONS, are known as “non-ionising radiation”. Radiofrequency energy is not capable of breaking chemical bonds in biological structures or removing electrons (ionisation). In this respect they are very different, and should not be confused with, ionising radiation produced by x-rays and gamma rays produced by nuclear processes.

SACTA relies on the expert advice of international health authorities, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and on guidance from the South African Department of Health. The consensus of these organisations, having reviewed relevant research and noted the findings of independent and authoritative expert scientific review panels on RF, is that there is no substantiated evidence of health effects from the low levels of RF generated by mobile phones and base stations, which comply with national and international safety guidelines:

“None of the recent reviews have concluded that exposure to the radiofrequency (RF) fields from mobile phones or their base stations causes any adverse health consequence.

”World Health Organisation press release of January 2002

About SACTA:

SACTA is an independent non-profit association representing the cellular communications equipment manufacturers and network operators within South Africa. More information can be obtained from www.sacta.co.za.