

**Department of Health**

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Attention: **Herman Liebenberg**

HEALTH EFFECTS OF CELLULAR BASE STATIONS

The Directorate: Radiation Control is the section of the Department of Health that is responsible for non-ionizing radiation protection, including electromagnetic fields. In carrying out this responsibility, the Directorate has been utilising the World Health Organization's (WHO) International EMF Project as its primary source of information and guidance with respect to the health effects of EMF. Consequently, the Directorate has elected to apply the exposure guidelines published in 1998 by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), based on the official endorsement of the WHO in this regard. ICNIRP states categorically that exposure to EMF at any level below that of the ICNIRP exposure guidelines will protect people against the known adverse health effects of EMF. It is the intention of the Directorate to require compliance with the ICNIRP exposure guidelines in the forthcoming EMF regulations. The Department of Health is currently engaged in a comprehensive process of compiling new regulations with regard to electromagnetic fields (EMF). A key issue that is being dealt with is the question as to how wide the scope of regulatory control of electromagnetic fields should be, i.e. whether cellular and/or other low power RF technologies should be included, and if so, on what basis and subject to which control measures.

Measurement surveys conducted around the world have shown that the actual levels of public exposure, as a result of base station emissions, are invariably only fractions of a percentage of the ICNIRP guidelines, even in instances where members of the public have been really concerned about their exposure to these emissions. The Department is therefore completely satisfied that the health of the general public is not being compromised by their exposure to the microwave emissions of cellular base stations, because at present no

confirmed scientific evidence exists that would indicate any hazard to human health in this regard. For local authorities this would mean that, when they have to consider the environmental impact of any particular base station, no account would need to be taken, on health grounds, of parameters such as mast heights, separation distances, duration of exposure, etc. In all of this, it is implicitly assumed that the normal security measures, which are routinely being implemented by the network providers at all base stations, will be effective in preventing reasonable members of the public from gaining ready access to the antennas situated on any mast structure.

It is important to note that even though, at this moment, the Department of Health is neither prescribing nor enforcing any exposure limits for electromagnetic fields, we do most strongly advise all parties concerned, be it industry, government or the public, that compliance with the afore-mentioned ICNIRP guidelines is the recommended, science-based way to approach any situation involving exposure to electromagnetic fields.

Yours sincerely,



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DEPUTY DIRECTOR: RADIATION CONTROL