

The logo for the Mobile Operators Association (MOA) features the lowercase letters 'moa' in a white, sans-serif font, positioned inside a dark blue, teardrop-shaped graphic that points towards the top right.

mobile
operators
association

responsible
network
development

The need for Mobile Networks

There are now more than 62.5 million mobile phones in use in the UK. In the past decade, mobile phones have transformed the way that people communicate - both in their business and in their personal lives.

However, mobile phones cannot work without a network of base stations in places where people want to use them. The majority of people in the UK live and work in towns and cities, and this is why the operators need to ensure that there is an efficient network service in those areas to allow people to use their phones when and where they want. To get a good signal you need to be near a base station. Base stations can only carry a maximum of around 120 calls at the same time.

Mobile phone users in the UK area are increasingly demanding better coverage, more capacity in the networks to stop calls from being lost, and more services to be available on their phones. Mobile operators are responding to that customer demand.

Health concerns

We do understand that some people are concerned about the perceived health effects of mobile phone technology, and we are committed to addressing those concerns in an open and transparent manner. The industry will continue to support ongoing research.

The international scientific community has been looking at this issue for several years. In the UK alone there have been five independent reviews of the available scientific evidence. Twenty nine reviews worldwide have not found adverse health effects caused by mobile phone base stations operating within the international health and safety guidelines used in the UK.

The expert review of the science published in January 2004 in the UK by the independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation had a very reassuring message for the public: "Exposure levels from living near mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to human health."

Mobile phones cannot work without a network of base stations in places where people want to use them.

No less than 30 scientific reviews worldwide in the past five years have not found adverse health effects caused by mobile phone base stations operating within the international health and safety guidelines used in the UK.

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Internationally and in the UK there have been no less than 30 government and other official scientific reviews published during the past five years. All have concluded there is a lack of hard information showing adverse health effects with the use of mobile phones or living or working near to radio base stations.

There have been particular concerns regarding phone masts on or near schools and their grounds. We are especially sensitive to those concerns, which is why the operators are committed to undertaking extra consultation with school governors and parents on any proposed development on or near school grounds. The NRPB report on mobile phones and health (January 2005) concluded that there is no scientific justification for introducing minimum distances between mobile phone base stations and places where people live, work and go to school since this would have little impact on people's overall exposure as there are so many other sources of radio frequency emissions, such as TV and radio transmitters.

Community consultation

The five UK mobile network operators - 3, O2, Orange, T-Mobile and Vodafone - introduced the Ten Commitments to best siting practice in 2001. The aim of the Ten Commitments is to ensure transparency in building mobile phone networks, to provide more information to the public and local planners and to boost the community's role in the siting of radio base stations.

These now form part of the English and Welsh Governments' Codes of Best Practice for mobile telecoms development and are recognised in the Scottish Executive's planning guidance on radio telecommunications.

The operators' performance under the Ten Commitments has twice been reviewed by independent auditors Deloitte. The most recent review, published in January 2005, concludes that the operators have continued to show demonstrable progress in the implementation of the Ten Commitments. A copy of the Ten Commitments, and the two Deloitte reviews, can be found on the Mobile Operators Association website.

Further information

Information on the Ten Commitments, planning and health issues can be found on the Mobile Operators Association website - www.mobilemastinfo.com

Health advice to the public and the Government is provided by the Health Protection Agency, and can be accessed on the HPA website - www.hpa.gov.uk/radiation/

The Department of Health leaflets; Mobile Phone Base Stations and Health and Mobile Phones and Health can be found on the Department of Health website - www.dh.gov.uk

Information on the siting of mobile phone base stations and an audit of radio wave emissions at schools and hospitals can be found on Ofcom's website - www.ofcom.gov.uk/advice/telecoms_ifc/

The Mobile Operators Association represents the interests of the UK's five mobile phone network operators - 3, O2, Orange, T-Mobile and Vodafone - on radiofrequency health and associated planning issues.

For individual operator contact details see www.mobilemastinfo.com

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