

FACT SHEET NO. 1

CELL PHONE SAFETY

The Minister responsible for Telecommunications, through the Telecommunications Unit, is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the Radio Frequency (RF) emissions, i.e., the radiation emanating from cell phones and other wireless devices, are at a safe level and, therefore, would not endanger the health and safety of the general population of Barbados.

The rapid use of cell phones worldwide has caused many of the Bodies which set Standards to focus on the problem of radiation from these wireless devices, in particular cell phones, and to set standards for the emission levels. One such Body is the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the USA. The FCC has set stringent parameters for cell phone emissions Standards. Only cell phones manufactured to these Standards are sold in the USA.

Any particular type of cell phone can only be sold for use in the USA if it passes a number of tests by either the FCC laboratory or an FCC approved independent testing facility. Then, and only then, would it be given a “type approval” and be issued with a Federal Communication Commission Identification (FCC ID).

Among the many tests of which all wireless equipment must pass, is the Specific Absorption Rate (SAR). In this test, the radiation from the cell phone is measured through a solution which is equivalent to the human tissue. The amount of radiation is measured with probes and the results tabulated. The phone is tested under various environmental conditions and must pass all tests to become certified.

The Minister, through the Telecommunications Unit, has adopted the internationally set standards for all cell phones to be used in Barbados, as these standards offer a great margin of safety for the users.

The Telecommunications Unit, under the Telecommunication Act 2001-36, will allow only those cell phones that are “type approved” and have the requisite FCC ID, or European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) ID, or any other relevant International Standard, as approved by the Telecommunications Unit, to be used in Barbados.

The ID number is normally found in the battery compartment next to the serial number of the phone.

**Issued by: Minister Responsible for Telecommunications
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