

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3360

ANSWERED ON:16.03.2011

FUNCTIONING OF MOBILE TOWERS

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of mobile towers functioning in the country as on date;
- (b) whether these towers were set up in accordance with the prescribed norms and standards;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the action taken by the Government against the erring telecom operators in this regard;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to adopt more stringent norms and standards for installation of mobile towers and manufacture of mobile handsets; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI SACHIN PILOT)

(a) Madam, the number of Base Transmitting Stations (BTS) functioning through mobile towers in the country as on date are 5,88,077.

(b) & (c) Mobile Towers are being installed by the Telecom Service Providers after obtaining siting clearances from Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) Wing of Department of Telecommunications (DoT). WPC issues siting clearance for installation of mobile towers for each and every site from the point of view of interference with other wireless users, aviation hazards and obstruction to any other existing microwave links.

Further, DoT has adopted the Electro Magnetic Radiation norms prescribed by International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) regarding radiation from mobile towers. DoT, vide letter No. 800-15/2010-VAS dated 8th April 2010 has directed all Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS)/ Unified Access Service (UAS) licensees for compliance of the reference limits/ levels prescribed by ICNIRP by way of self certification of their Base Transmitting Station (BTS) for meeting the Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) radiations norms.

Accordingly, Self certification is to be submitted to respective Telecom Enforcement Resource & Monitoring (TERM) Cells of DOT. All new BTS sites shall start radiating only after self certificate has been submitted to relevant TERM Cells.

The TERM Cell will test up to 10% of new BTS sites randomly at its discretion. Additionally, the BTS sites against which there are public complaints shall also be tested by TERM Cell. The testing shall be done as per procedures prescribed by Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC) from time to time.

If a site fails to meet the EMR criterion, a penalty of Rs. 5 lakh shall be levied per BTS per service provider. Service providers must meet the criterion within one month of the report of TERM cell in such cases, after which the site will be shut down.

Accordingly, the self certifications are being submitted by the telecom service providers to respective TERM Cells. Out of 5,88,077 Base Transmitting Stations (BTS), the self certifications have been submitted by the service providers to the respective TERM Cells for 5,28,621 BTSs. TERM Cells have carried out the testing of radiation levels for 1770 BTSs and found that the radiations levels are in compliance of ICNIRP prescribed levels in all the tested BTSs.

(d) & (e) To examine the effect of EMF Radiation from base stations and mobile phones, DoT has constituted an Inter-ministerial committee consisting of officers from DoT, Indian Council of Medical Research, Ministry of Health, Department of Biotechnology and Ministry of Environment and Forest.

Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) in its report has indicated that most of the laboratory studies were unable to find a direct link between exposure to radio frequency radiation and health; and the scientific studies as yet have not been able to confirm a cause-and-effect relationship between radio frequency radiation and health. The effect of emission from cell phone towers is not known yet with certainty. However, the committee has also suggested certain safeguards. The IMC report has been placed on the DoT website for stakeholders' feedback to be submitted by 31st March 2011.