

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 18.11.2010
ANSWERED ON
NATIONAL POLICY ON SETTING UP OF TELECOM TOWERS .

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Dr. K.P. Ramalingam

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

- (a) whether Government proposes to formulate a national policy on setting up of telecom towers;
- (b) if so, whether this policy would specify the minimum radiation standards as well as minimum distance to be maintained from schools, hospitals and tourist attraction; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI SACHIN PILOT)

(a) No, Sir. As per existing policy, Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing of Department of Telecommunications (DoT) 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. The siting clearance is issued without prejudice to applicable bylaws, rules and regulation of local bodies such as Municipal Corporation/Gram Panchayat etc.

Further, as per terms and conditions of the access service license, the licensee is required to ensure that the telecommunication installation carried out by it should not become a safety hazard and is not in contravention of any statute, rule or regulation and public policy.

However, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has started a pre-consultation on 'Telecom Tower and Related Issues' in February 2010, for seeking stakeholders' comments. Based on the inputs received from stakeholders, TRAI is in the process of preparing and floating a consultation paper on the issues pertaining to telecom towers.

(b) & (c) Various studies have been conducted by World Health Organization (WHO) and International Commission on Non Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Fact Sheet No. 304 of May 2006 of WHO states that "Considering the very low exposure levels and research results collected to date, there is no convincing scientific evidence that the weak RF signals from base stations and wireless networks cause adverse health effects." ICNIRP Guidelines related to radiation norms have been adopted by DoT.

There is no bar for installation of mobile towers in residential areas or near the school, hospitals and places of tourist attraction. Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued instructions to all the Access Service Providers to conform to the limits of radiation as prescribed by ICNIRP from time to time. Latest detailed instructions have been issued vide DoT letter no. 800-15/2010-VAS dated 08.04.2010, which inter-alia states that:

(i) All Base Station Transceivers (BTSs) should be self certified as meeting the radiation norms. Self certification is to be submitted to respective Telecom Enforcement Resource & Monitoring (TERM) Cells of DoT by 15.11.2010.

(ii) All new BTS sites should start radiating only after self certificate has been submitted to relevant TERM Cells.

(iii) The TERM Cell will test upto 10 per cent of new BTS sites randomly at its discretion. Additionally, BTS sites against which there are public complaints shall also be tested by TERM Cell.

(iv) If a site fails to meet the Electro Magnetic Radiation 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 site will be shut down.