



Office of Utility Regulation

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All Mobile Masts meet Safety Guidelines

The latest audit of mobile mast sites in the Bailiwick has found that each of the 66 sites remains within the safety standards imposed by the OUR. The audit, the results of which are published today, was carried out on all sites which were operational in the Bailiwick in April 2008 and was conducted to ensure that each site complies with the guidelines laid down by the International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

Key findings from the audit include:

- Emission levels from all sites comply with the ICNIRP guidelines;
- The increase of sharing antennae at mast sites has led to higher cumulative emissions at certain sites – but all remain within the guideline limits; and
- The OUR's consultants recommend the continued use of the ICNIRP guidelines as being appropriate for Guernsey.

“There has been a significant increase in the number of sites shared by operators and as a result this has led to an increase in the overall level of emissions at certain sites, which is to be expected. However it is reassuring to note that even with increased site sharing, which is in itself welcomed, all sites continue to comply with the most stringent safety guidelines,” said John Curran, Director General at the OUR. “This audit will, I hope, provide reassurance to Islanders that the telecoms companies are taking their obligations seriously and that there is an independent check that this remains the case”.

In keeping with the OUR's commitment to make the results of the site audits publicly available, the OUR has worked in conjunction with Digimap to provide easier access to

detailed site information. For the first time, the location and emissions levels from each site have been displayed on the States Digimap website. Islanders can use the map to exactly locate masts and to check the emissions from each operator and the cumulative emissions at each location. The full audit reports from each site audit can be found on the OUR's website. The OUR is intending to carry out further spot-checks on 15 sites in 2009 and 2010 and the results of these future audits will be published in due course.

The OUR also undertook a review of whether the ICNIRP guidelines remain the most appropriate standard against which to assess operator's compliance. The OUR's advisors, Red-M, compared the ICNIRP guidelines with those from countries such as the China, Russia, Switzerland and Italy.

"The need to require operators to comply with an alternative to ICNIRP was examined, but we have not been provided with a convincing argument for using any standard other than ICNIRP. In fact the the World Health Organisation (WHO) is seeking to get all countries to adopt the ICNIRP guidelines as a common standard, so the rationale for Guernsey moving in the opposite direction is lacking", said John Curran. "ICNIRP guidelines continue to be recommended by the UK's Health Protection Agency and the European Commission. It is however worth noting that even using an alternative standard, such as that used by China or Russia, the measured emission levels from all but one site would still meet this standard."

The OUR's audit comprised of a number of separate reviews and included reviewing the processes and procedures licensees have in place to ensure on-going compliance and to ensure the safety of the public, their employees and others who may need to carry out work at a mast site.

"The report in general confirms that operators take this responsibility very seriously. It has however identified a small number of areas where operators can take additional steps to further improve their processes and procedures. These address issues such as improved site signage and closer assessment of indoor sites. We will be talking to the companies concerned directly on these company-specific issues," said John Curran.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

1. To view the summary results from each audit visit <http://maps.digimap.gg/masts/>
2. To see the OUR's summary report 08/13 and full audit results, visit the OUR website www.regutil.gg or call the office on 711120 to receive a report free of charge.
3. **The ICNIRP standard** - All OUR licensees must comply with the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) standards that are also used in most European countries, including the UK. ICNIRP is an independent, non-government organisation which is formally recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) which evaluates scientific results from all over the world and produces guidelines recommending limits of exposure.

About the OUR

The Office of Utility Regulation was established in 2001 to regulate the three utilities of post, telecommunications and electricity in the Bailiwick of Guernsey. The Office is headed up by Director General, John Curran and has four staff.

The role of the OUR is to protect the interests of Guernsey consumers and the economy. It does this by ensuring that customers receive the best in price, choice and quality services in the three regulated sectors, while at the same time ensuring that those sectors are vibrant and robust so that they can positively contribute to and underpin a successful Guernsey economy.

The OUR licenses and regulates telecommunications operators, Guernsey Electricity Ltd and Guernsey Post Ltd. Wherever possible, the OUR promotes the introduction of competition by ensuring that there is fair play and a level playing field between the operators. Where competition is not yet effective or where it is not feasible, the OUR regulates prices and quality of services to end customers. More information is available from the OUR website www.regutil.gg, or by contacting the Office of Utility Regulation on 01481 711120.