

Date : 28 January 2002

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## **No indications for radiation risks of mobile phones**

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*The electromagnetic field of a mobile telephone does not constitute a health hazard, according to the present state of scientific knowledge. Therefore, there are no reasons for a revision of the exposure limits. This is the main conclusion of an advisory report that has been presented today to the Dutch Government by the Health Council of the Netherlands.*

Over half of the Dutch populations possess a mobile telephone these days. Together with the strong increase in the use of handies, concern also grew on possible health hazards due to exposure to the electromagnetic fields ('radiation') emitted by the phones. Properly conducted research has not demonstrated any association between frequent use of a mobile phone and the occurrence of headache, dizziness, or an increase in the risk of brain tumours.

In some experimental studies, effects on certain biological systems have been found, such as a slight influence of natural brain wave patterns during sleep, or, in some tests, a small increase in reaction speed. These effects are very minimal, however, can only be measured with sensitive equipment and are reversible. It concerns influences that the human body can easily deal with. Therefore they cannot be considered as hazardous to health.

According to the Health Council of the Netherlands, further research is needed to get a better understanding of longterm effects in particular. The data presently available are no reason, however, for a reconsideration of exposure limits proposed in earlier reports. The Council also feels that there is no need for recommending restrictions on the use of mobile phones by children.

The electromagnetic fields emitted by mobile telephones can cause interference in electronic equipment. This might result in health problems if this concerns medical equipment. Mobile phones should not be used, therefore, in the direct vicinity of such apparatus. The requirements for resistance against interference have been increased lately for this equipment. The Council feels this should go further still.

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In order to increase road safety, the upcoming ban to use mobile phones while driving a motorized vehicle without a handsfree set should be extended to the drivers of all vehicles. However, according to recent data it does not make much difference for the safety on the road whether calls are made with or without a handsfree device while driving a vehicle. The Health Council therefore discourages to engage in extended or 'difficult' conversations during driving.

The report has been drafted by the Electromagnetic Fields Committee which consists of: • dr EW Roubos, *chairman*, professor of Zoology; Catholic University of Nijmegen • dr LM van Aernsbergen, *advisor*, physicist; Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, The Hague • dr G Brussaard, professor of Radiocommunication; Technical University of Eindhoven • dr J Havenaar, psychiatrist; Utrecht Academic Medical Centre • FBJ Koops, biologist; Arnhem • dr FE van Leeuwen, professor of Cancer Epidemiology; Free University of Amsterdam • dr HK Leonhard, *advisor*, physicist; Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, Groningen • dr GC van Rhooon, physicist; Erasmus Medical Centre, Rotterdam • dr GMH Swaen, epidemiologist; University of Maastricht • DHJ van de Weerdt, MD, specialist in environmental medicine; Zwolle Municipal Health Service • dr APM Zwamborn, professor of Electromagnetic Effects; Technical University of Eindhoven • dr E van Rongen, *scientific secretary*, radiobiologist; Health Council of the Netherlands, The Hague.

*The publication 'Mobile telephones', nr2002/01E, can be obtained at the Bureau of the Health Council of the Netherlands, fax + 31 70 340 75 23, e-mail order@gr.nl or at www.gr.nl. Further information is given by dr E van Rongen, tel. + 31 70 340 57 30, mobile + 31 6 55 11 12 95, e-mail e.van.rongen@gr.nl.*

*Recently published other reports on this subject by the Health Council of the Netherlands are 'GSM base stations', nr 2000/16E and 'Electromagnetic fields: Annual Update 2001', nr 2001/14E.*