

Overseas devices disrupting mobile services in Australia

Australians purchasing non-compliant cordless phones from overseas are inadvertently causing interference to 3G mobile phone networks, ACMA field officers have discovered.

For the past three months, ACMA field officers have been receiving regular incident reports involving interference to 3G mobile telephone networks in the 1900 MHz band. These reports have prompted a series of investigations.


One of the key areas of responsibility for the ACMA is the identification and resolution of interference to radiocommunications. Telecommunications carriers providing mobile telephony services use several frequency bands in the radiocommunications spectrum for their mobile phone networks. The recent investigations by the Field Operations Section have revealed that an increasing number of interference events are being caused by the use of non-compliant digital cordless telephone handsets.

Australian consumers should ensure that the phones they purchase comply with Australian requirements.

In particular, digital cordless telephone handsets sold overseas as DECT 6 technology have been found in Australia operating in the radiofrequency band above 1900 MHz. In Australia, this band is allocated to Australian mobile telephone networks. Unauthorised transmissions from non-compliant handsets can have a significant impact on the operation of the telephone networks, often resulting in mobile network users in affected areas experiencing high rates of call drop-outs or failed connections.

Typically, the cordless phones causing interference have been purchased by Australians while travelling overseas or shopping on the internet. These phone systems are not labelled to show compliance with Australia's telecommunications standards and cannot legally be used in Australia.

The term DECT 6 is used by manufacturers to specify the technology used rather than the radiofrequency that the device operates on. Some Australian suppliers market their cordless phones as DECT 6 phones. These phones typically operate in the class licensed band between 1800–1900 MHz.

Australian consumers should ensure that the phones they purchase comply with Australian requirements. A phone labelled with the 'A-Tick' compliance mark (see image) signifies that the supplier has tested the phone to ensure that it meets the ACMA's telecommunications standards and compliance regulatory arrangements. 

For information about the use of DECT telephones in Australia, download *DECT devices—Supply or use in Australia* from the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to About ACMA: Publications & research > Publications > ACMA Corporate publications > Fact sheets > Telecommunications fact sheets > DECT devices—Supply or use in Australia).

