

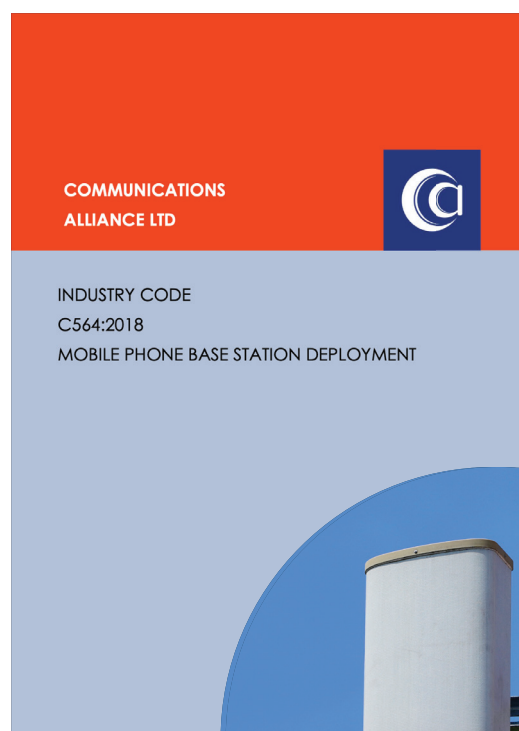
Guide to Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code

Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment

The Communications Alliance Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code 2018 (or 'the Code') outlines the steps telecommunications carriers must take when deciding the location and design of new mobile phone base stations.

All licensed mobile network carriers must comply with the requirements of the Code.

The Code is designed to complement the existing regulatory and legislative requirements for telecommunications deployment. It ensures greater community consultation and participation in the siting of mobile phone base stations and requires carriers to apply a precautionary approach, during the site selection, design and operation of mobile phone base stations.



THE PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH

The Code provides the context for the application of a precautionary approach to site selection and design.

When considering the location of a new site, carriers must consider:

- Areas which may be considered to be 'community sensitive' locations
- Minimising exposure to electromagnetic emissions or radiation (EME or EMR)
- The carrier's service objectives
- The outcomes of the consultation processes undertaken
- Relevant state and local government planning policies

When designing a new site, carriers must consider:

- The reason for the installation of the infrastructure considering their coverage, capacity and quality objectives
- The positioning of antennas to minimise the obstruction of radio signals
- The service requirements of the site
- Restricting access to areas where EME exposure may exceed safety limits
- The objective of minimizing power while meeting service objectives
- Whether the cost of achieving this objective is reasonable

Carriers must also apply a precautionary approach to site operation by being able to demonstrate compliance with Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) EME regulations, restrict general public access to identified EME hazard areas and have regard to relevant occupational health and safety requirements.

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Community Consultation

The Code outlines extensive consultation procedures which must be undertaken for sites that are classified as 'low impact' in accordance with the requirements of the Telecommunications (Low Impact Facilities) Determination 2018.

Sites that are not low impact must comply with the relevant Local and State Government planning regulations and council's consultation requirements.

Consultation requirements for 'low impact' facilities vary depending on the type of facility that a carrier proposes to install. For example, an installation at a new site requires a carrier to prepare a consultation plan based on its assessment of possible interested and affected parties. Prior to undertaking the consultation, the carrier must consult with the council about the consultation plan. The Code outlines minimum timeframes that must be followed during the consultation process.

The consultation plan must be written so that it is 'fit for purpose' so it needs to be responsive to consultation outcomes and be easily adaptable. In many cases, the consultation plan will evolve during the consultation process.

Online site information

A key component of the Code is the concept of the industry supplying easily accessible web-based information.

All mobile base stations have a site specific information page on the internet database called the Radio Frequency National Site Archive (www.rfnsa.com.au) that provides details about the location, environmental EME levels, compliance and carrier contact details.

For all new sites that do not require Development Approval, the online site database will have a dedicated 'Community Consultation' page that includes:

- What is proposed
- Why the site is needed
- The consultation plan and proposed consultation activities
- Technical information about the proposal and up to date information about the status of the site as the consultation process evolves.

Health and Safety Information

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) developed an EME Report to ensure that information about mobile phone base stations and levels of EME when construction of the facility is complete are clearly presented to interested stakeholders during the consultation process.

The ARPANSA Environmental EME Report must be prepared for all new mobile phone base station installations and for upgrades of existing sites. A site specific Environmental EME Report can be requested from the relevant carrier or accessed at www.rfnsa.com.au

Complaints about Code Activities

The Code requires carriers to have written procedures for dealing with complaints about their compliance with the Code. If a complaint is not resolved, it can be referred to the ACMA.

Not all members of the community may be satisfied by improved consultation, however, carriers take the concerns of the community seriously and are committed to addressing these concerns responsibly.

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Development of the Code

The Code was originally introduced in 2002 and was then known as 'ACIF 564:2002 Deployment of Radiocommunications Infrastructure' Industry Code.

The Code was developed by community, consumer, industry, and government representatives. A scheduled review of the Code was conducted in 2003 and a revised Code was published in 2004. A third scheduled review of the Code occurred in 2011 and C564:2011 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code came into effect in 2012.

The latest scheduled review of the Code commenced in 2017 and the current version of the Code renamed C564:2018 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code, came into effect in 2018.

The 2018 version of the Code included amendments to address the introduction of new technologies and refine consultation and complaint handling procedures.

A copy of the
Deployment Code can
be obtained via the
Communications Alliance,
see here:

<https://www.commsalliance.com.au/Documents/all/codes/c564>



For more information, please contact:

Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA)

www.amta.org.au
Ph: (02) 8920 3555

Additional independent information may be obtained from:

Communications Alliance (CA)

www.commsalliance.com.au
Ph: (02) 9959 9111

Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)

https://web.acma.gov.au/standards_compliance.htm
Ph: (03) 9963 6800

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)

www.arpansa.gov.au
Ph: (03) 9433 2211