What is the National Register of RF Workers?

In 1999 the Minister of Public Health asked the Radiation Protection Division of the Health protection Agency to set up an independent expert group to examine the possible effects on health of mobile phone telecommunication technologies. The group under the chairmanship of Sir William Stewart published its report in May 2000. One of the main conclusions was that there was no evidence to date to suggest that exposures to Radiofrequency (RF) radiation below International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines caused adverse health effects.

Nevertheless the report recommended the establishment of a register of occupationally exposed workers to facilitate studies into cancer incidence, mortality, and other potential harmful effects. This would help determine whether such workers have any higher incidence than would normally be expected in the general population.

As a result the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) formed a Working Group to discuss how the recommendations should be implemented. Consisting of representatives from across the whole industrial sector. The group agreed to the establishment of a register of RF workers with a potential for exposure to radio-frequency radiation, above public exposure guidelines. The information is maintained in a centralised database called The National Register of RF Workers. The Register Steering Group, consisting of representatives from across the industry including Broadcasters, the HSE, and contractors, has been created to monitor the database and future research projects.

What data will the Register need?

The information that will be held for each worker on the Register consists of:
- Name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Home address or first three characters of the postcode
- Job title
- Length of time in current post (years)
- Total number of years employed in jobs involving RF exposure
- Details of any known high exposure incidents experienced.

Who owns the data and the database?

The data submitted to the Register by a consenting individual remains the property of that individual; as such it can be accessed at any time. The database is owned by the HSE and is currently being administered by the Institute of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (IOEM), University of Birmingham. The Steering Group, consisting of representatives from the HSE and industry, decides which specific research projects will be allowed to make use of the register.
How long will it last and what will happen to the Register in the future?
Established in 2002, the Register expects to continue recruiting participants until at least the end of 2017. During this period proposals will be developed and assessed with regards possible future studies.

Will the information be kept confidential?
Yes. All the information provided to the IOEM is entirely confidential to the study. It will be dealt with in strictest confidence by the Research Team, held in a secure database, and not passed on to any third party other than those involved in the subsequent analysis of data.

What are the benefits of participation?
There has been speculation that long-term RF exposure might cause adverse health effects, both occupationally and in the general public. This is the first Register of its kind anywhere in the world that aims to investigate whether there are any effects of long-term occupational RF exposure. Your involvement and help in this study is essential in order to ensure meaningful analysis of any health effects.

What should I do now?
If a consent form is enclosed, please complete this and return to your company contact person.

If you have not received a consent form please contact a member of the research team (details below)

If you do have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the following:

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