

DTI PRESS NOTICE

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MORE SPECTRUM FOR CELLULAR RADIO IN LONDON

The Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence announced today that the number of radio frequencies available for use by cellular radio in London is to be increased by using frequencies currently allocated to the Ministry of Defence.

This decision should enable the maximum traffic capacity of the two cellular radio systems in the central London area to be more than doubled.

The need for further frequencies has been brought about by the rapid success of cellular radio in the UK market. The speed of uptake, particularly in the London area, has exceeded expectations. In order to avoid unacceptable congestion in future, the Department has been looking with the cellular operators at how more frequencies can be made available in central London, where demand and traffic are growing particularly quickly. The operators have already used a number of techniques to get the most of the existing frequencies in central London.

The frequencies immediately below those presently used for cellular radio are allocated to the Ministry of Defence. They have agreed that subject to certain restrictions, these frequencies may in future be used by the cellular radio operators in London. Initially a further 200 channels are to become available to each operator - compared with 300 channels each at present. Ultimately, if demand justifies it, a further 120 channels could be made available making a total within central London of up to 620 for each operator.

The cellular radio operators will be discussing with equipment manufacturers a modified specification which will enable full advantage to be taken of these extra channels.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1 The two cellular operators are Cellnet (Telecom Securicor Cellular Radio) and Racal-Vodafone.

2 The frequency bands used at present are from 890 - 905 MHz, paired with 935 - 950 MHz. The new frequencies available in central London will be from the bands 872 - 888 MHz and 917 - 933 MHz.

3 The exact nature of the restrictions on use of the new frequencies is still being discussed. Broadly, they will be available anywhere within 6 miles of Charing Cross. Because of the way the cellular radio system is controlled, it is possible to use these frequencies in London without the user having to take any action or being aware of the transition.

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