

B I P T

BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

“DECT 6.0” cordless telephones disturb mobile operators

Brussels, 16 October – After a first communication in 2013, BIPT warns again against illegal “DECT 6.0” cordless telephones, which are not intended for the European market. These DECT (Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications) devices come from the United States and Canada and create interferences on mobile operators’ networks.

Each year, the departments of BIPT monitoring the electromagnetic spectrum receive hundreds of complaints (370 in 2016, 232 during the first half of 2017) of radio communications systems users whose communications are disturbed. This concerns for instance radio controls activating a garage door, weather stations, baby monitors, communications on a building site or aeronautical and maritime communications. There is a wide range of interferences; the severity of the numerous causes and of the consequences may vary, from a mere nuisance to real economic or security issues.

For several years, BIPT has frequently been faced with interferences affecting mobile operators. In 2016, 200 of the 370 complaints involved mobile operators. One of the major causes is the use of domestic cordless phones, commonly called “DECTs” and initially intended for the American and Canadian markets. We refer then to DECT 6.0 devices.

The radio spectrum is used as a support for communications: it represents a natural scarce resource which must be rationally and efficiently managed to be usefully operated. One of BIPT’s tasks, as the Belgian regulator, is to ensure that this scarce resource is fairly shared between users in order to maximise its usage, while reducing the risk of interference to a minimum. Each category of equipment using the spectrum is allocated a section of the spectrum by the regulator to roll out its activities. These spectrum sections are coordinated at an international level, which allows for instance a smartphone to correctly operate in Belgium as well as in any other place on the globe, provided that there is a network.

Despite the ongoing willingness to globally harmonise frequency bands used by a same application (Wi-Fi, Bluetooth...) to the greatest extent possible, the national historical character of spectrum assignment still leads to usage incompatibilities.

This is the case with the band assigned to these DECT 6.0 devices in the United States and in Canada, while in Europe, this band and others are used by mobile operators. However, from a legal perspective, operators obtained via their licence the exclusive use of the frequencies that have been assigned to them: no other application may use the same frequencies.

The opportunities to buy this type of cordless phone on the Internet or during a trip abroad have increased the use of these devices in Belgium, increasing the nuisances observed by operators.

If severe and repeated interferences are observed and if the perpetrator acted knowingly, the equipment can be seized and a fine can also be imposed.

What are the consequences if we use a DECT 6.0 device?

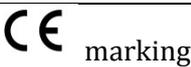
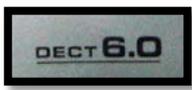
Le legislation is sufficiently clear. It provided for a fine from 1,600 to 16,000 EUR and/or a sentence of imprisonment from eight days to a year.

BIPT's agents who were granted the capacity of criminal investigation officers are authorised to produce official reports and to seize the unauthorised equipment. Through their expertise and the high-tech equipment they use, they always succeed in finding the sources of interference.

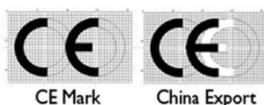
Which cordless phones can I buy without any risk?

When you buy a cordless phone, ensure that it works according to the DECT standard (and not DECT 6.0) and that it bears the CE marking.

How can I check if my phone is a DECT or DECT 6.0?

DECT	DECT 6.0
 <p>CE marking</p>	<p>No  marking</p> <p> American marking</p> <p>Possible DECT 6.0 indication</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>
Frequencies from 1,880 to 1,900MHz	Frequencies from 1,920 to 1,930MHz

Please be careful not to confuse the CE European marking with the “Chinese Export” marking that was solely created to introduce confusion among consumers:



What can I do if I have bought a DECT 6.0 telephone? Can I take action against the seller?

If you have bought a DECT 6.0 phone from a seller established in the European Union, the seller sold you a device that is non-consistent with the normal use any ordinarily cautious and prudent person can expect from such a device. As the telephone was afflicted with a hidden defect, you can claim the hidden defect guarantee to the seller and demand repayment of the non-compliant device.

Can I avoid the fine if I stop using the telephone?

The only way to avoid a fine is naturally not to commit a violation. The only advice given by BIPT is *“Do not use that type of telephones!”*

If you own such devices, BIPT advises you not to use them anymore and to bring them back to the seller, or to get rid of them, either by bringing them to a waste disposal centre, or by sending them to a person who is authorised to use them according to the laid down conditions of use (such as a family member living in Canada or in the United States).

Whom can I contact in case of radio interference?

Radio interference can hinder and stop the proper operation of radio transmitters and/or receivers. The NCS (the National Spectrum Monitoring Department) of BIPT is responsible for policing the radio waves in the broad sense of the word.

Interferences can be notified by phone, post, fax or e-mail.

BIPT

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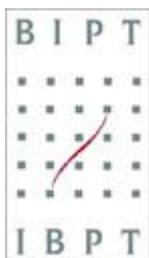
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