

TETRA - POLICE RADIOS THREATEN PUBLIC HEALTH

Tetra, or "Terrestrial Trunked Radio", also known as "Airwave", is a new integrated police radio system owned by the mobile phone company O2. The company claims that the system, which uses a network of transmitter masts, will improve communication within and between Police forces. There is evidence, however, that Tetra is costly and ineffective compared with other available systems already in use elsewhere. Initial costs for Tetra are nearly £3 billion, yet it is failing to deliver on data transmission speeds and may require twice as many masts as first estimated to work effectively. Most crucially, though, Tetra poses particular health risks since it emits microwave radiation and pulses at a low frequency which is very close to the brain's natural frequency, potentially interfering with brain function to devastating effect. Rival systems appear not to pose such risks.

Public health risks from Tetra

The public has good reason to be worried about the Tetra masts springing up all over the country. People living close to the masts have reported symptoms including headaches, migraines, nosebleeds and disturbed sleep patterns from the time the masts have been activated (the system has been piloted in a few areas before being activated countrywide in December). In some cases, those reporting clusters of symptoms were not even aware that the masts had been switched on, eliminating any possibility of claims that the symptoms were psychosomatic in origin.

One mast in Fife has been operational since the late 1990s and in the tiny 200-strong community living close to the mast, no less than five people have been diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND) in the past five years. That's 1 in 40, when the expected rate of MND cases in the general population over five years is about 1 in 10,000.

Health problems for the Police



Spare a thought for the Police too, who carry the handsets on their belts or lapels. A report in the *Leicester Mercury* on 19th November referred to health problems and deaths amongst police in the Leicestershire Force, who have been using Airwave on trial for about three years:

A Tetra mast skulking in the trees above the mid-Wales town of Llanidloes



Deputy chief constable David Lindley said 'a cluster' of cases had caused anxiety among staff over the Airwave system. One of the officers was father-of-two PC Neil Dring, 38, who died in June. His family claim he had developed the illness in his stomach, next to the place where he wore his handset. Now, it has emerged more officers have suffered recently from the disease. Mr Lindley said: "It caused a lot of concern because we had a number of colleagues with cancers within a relatively short time, and people have been saying 'What's going on?'"

Two Leicestershire police officers have died of oesophageal cancer, and a third has recently had a tumour removed from his oesophagus at just 26 years old. The statistical probability of three cases like this occurring by chance in a force of two thousand is one in several billion.

Lancashire Police force has also been piloting Tetra. Soon after the system was introduced, nearly 200 police officers reported symptoms including insomnia, nausea, migraines and lack of concentration, and similar symptoms were reported by Norfolk Police, also piloting Tetra.

The Police Federation has been concerned about Tetra from the outset and commissioned independent research by scientist Barrie Trower in 2001. Trower's findings were damning and the report was suppressed, but it was leaked on the internet and can be read in full at: www.planningsanity.co.uk/reports/trower.htm. Trower reported that low frequency electromagnetic radiation can cause heart problems, blood problems, bone marrow problems, tumours, leukaemia, sleep problems, skin problems, and interference with calcium and melatonin production. Trower said: "I fail to see how Tetra can possibly be safe for the officers [who] use it."

So, next time you're on a demonstration, engage the nearest Police officer in conversation about Tetra to ensure that she or he is aware of the health problems and deaths amongst colleagues in other Police forces.

Keeping in touch with our friends in the US

The encryption keys for Tetra are made by Motorola, who are obliged to pass on these keys to the US Government. The end result is that all communications on Tetra can be monitored by the US, just another aspect of the insidious US takeover of Britain.

IS THERE A TETRA MAST NEAR YOU?

Local Action

Tetra is helping to foster community spirit in one small mid-Wales town, Llanidloes, which woke up after a Bank Holiday weekend in May to discover that a Tetra mast had appeared from nowhere, apparently legally but with no local consultation or agreement. The town united in opposing the mast, and has fought a spirited battle against its imposition on the community, a battle which is still in progress. Read more about the Llanidloes experience at www.llanidloes.org.

I paid a visit to the local Planning Department at Wrexham Council to see where our nearest masts are and whether their erection had been opposed. My information may not be comprehensive - there appears not to be a mast on top of Wrexham's only tower block, the Police Station, although this would be an ideal place for one - but I did discover that in Bwlchgwyn (Ty Hir Farm), Pontfadog and Llanarmon D.C., applications for Tetra masts were approved without objection. I presume this means that these masts are now operational.

There were more encouraging stories however. In Coedpoeth, permission for a mast was refused and the appeal failed after the landowner withdrew his consent to have the mast on his land. An application for a mast at Brymbo Sub-station attracted widespread local opposition, with many local residents writing well-informed and persuasive letters about the health risks. As a result, the application was turned down on the grounds that *"there is sufficient perception in the local community that the emissions from the mast may cause harm to health of local residents. As a result of these concerns, the amenity of local residents would be harmed..."* This seems to imply that it would be okay to put up the mast if local residents weren't aware of the risks to their health, but the decision was nevertheless an important victory for local people over corporate interests and government diktat.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you have a Motorola or O₂ mobile phone, write and tell them why you are switching to another company.

Contact your local councillor about Tetra, tell them about your worries, ask them if they know where your nearest mast is and whether there are any applications for new masts.

Check the local press regularly for planning notices for Airwave or MMO₂ masts. Look out for any new antennae being added to existing masts in your area. In some areas, Tetra masts have been erected illegally and only the vigilance of local people has ensured that these were removed.

Write to your MP and MEP. Green Party MEP Caroline Lucas has called for a Europe-wide ban on Tetra. She needs 313 signatures from MEPs for this to become EU official policy, which should ensure the end of Tetra in Britain.

Keep a health diary, starting now. Try to write an entry every day, recording any symptoms you experience along with obvious causes, and noting when you have unexplained symptoms. These diaries could be important evidence in future court cases.

Links

www.tetrawatch.net
www.mastsanity.org
www.mastaction.co.uk
www.powerwatch.org.uk
www.starweave.com

To see if there's a mast near you, look at www.sitefinder.radio.gov.uk.



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