

Law would require cell phone warnings

By: **KATIE WORTH** Examiner Staff Writer December 15, 2009

SAN FRANCISCO — Every cell phone sold in San Francisco could soon come with a label detailing the level of radiation [[ndlr: Specific Absorption Rate SAR](#)] you will be exposed to by using it and recommending a headset to avoid radiation exposure.

If a proposal endorsed Monday by the Commission on the Environment’s policy committee — and preliminarily supported by the mayor — moves forward, not only would consumers be alerted of potential risks of cell phone radiation, but it could become illegal to promote the devices in public schools, and the federal government would be officially called upon to change their standards for cell phones.

The committee’s 3-0 vote came in response to some scientific studies that suggest cell phone radiation can, over long periods of time, cause brain tumors on the side of the brain where the phone is held, and men who carry cell phones in their pocket may experience lower sperm counts.

Other recommendations made by the committee Monday were that The City purchase cell phones emitting the lowest possible radiation; **that the school district educate students and parents about cell phone radiation**; and the federal and state governments consider banning cell phone advertising aimed at children, who may be more vulnerable to any health risks associated with mobile phones.

The committee initially considered requiring cell phone merchants to provide a headset with any cell phone, but backed off on that requirement for now. It instead directed The City to “explore ways to encourage” the cell phone industry to provide headsets.

The proposal still must be endorsed by the Commission on the Environment, and then approved by the Board of Supervisors and the mayor. However, Mayor Gavin Newsom supports the idea in concept, mayoral spokesman Joe Arellano said.

“Mayor Newsom believes that cell phone radiation labeling is the next frontier in terms of consumer safety,” Arellano said. “He believes this step will allow The City to take a lead role in the United States in promoting labeling for cell phones at the point of purchase.”

In fact, Maine may beat San Francisco to the punch. That state’s legislature is considering a bill that would require a warning label on cell phones advising children and pregnant women to keep the devices away from their heads and bodies.

Monday’s meeting was attended by Ellie Marks of Lafayette, who helped advocate for Maine’s bill after her husband developed a large tumor on the side of his brain where he holds his cell phone. She said they are convinced his extensive cell phone use over 20 years caused the tumor. **She said he used the phone so much she often threatened to throw it away.**

“And how I wish I had,” she said. “I’m angry because this horror could have been avoided.”

Dial defense

A Commission on the Environment committee is proposing all cell phones sold in The City be accompanied by labels detailing radiation levels.

Possible effects of cell phone usage

- Brain tumors
- Lowered sperm count

Committee recommendations

- City purchase cell phones emitting lowest possible radiation [[ndlr: Specific Absorption Rate SAR-video](#)]
- Schools educate students and parents about cell phone radiation
- Federal and state governments restrict cell phone advertising aimed at kids

Source: Commission on the Environment policy committee



Health threat? A city proposal would call upon the government to change mobile phone standards in the wake of studies suggesting cell phone use can cause tumors. (AP)