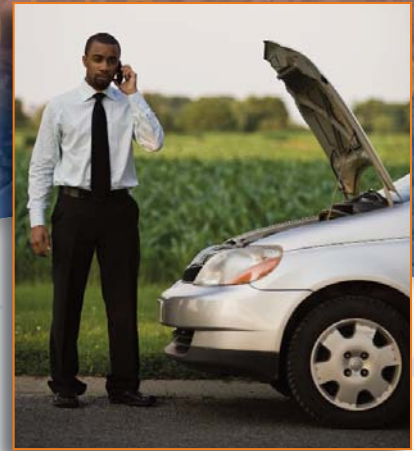




Wireless: What's in it for me?



Balancing risk and benefit in the use of technology: there's nothing new here.

Wireless communication is strongly desired by Canadians. This is clear from the widespread and growing use of wireless technology throughout Canadian society for safety, business and personal use. As with other technologies that benefit society, there can be risks associated with wireless communications. However, the public's exposure to radiofrequency (RF) fields is properly controlled by the Government of Canada. Societal benefits from the use of devices based on this technology essentially require that everyone in the community experience some level of exposure to RF fields.

In what ways do individuals and society benefit from wireless communications?

Benefits from wireless communications are enjoyed by all of us. We use cellphones and other wireless devices to meet very diverse needs. Cellphones can directly benefit our health and personal security. The fact that RF fields are transmitted throughout our communities is what allows us to communicate quickly in an emergency. In Canada, approximately 50 percent of 911 calls are initiated by someone using a cellphone. Even if you do not use a cellphone, you or your family may, at some point, benefit from someone who does. Cellphones also improve personal security, most often appreciated when we feel physically vulnerable.

The most fundamental day-to-day benefit of wireless technology, including cellphones, is the ability to communicate with far more flexibility.

Most Canadians have chosen to use wireless technology in one way or another – it is usually just a matter of degree.

What are some of the potential risks associated with wireless communications?

Potential risks come in two main forms: well known and those that are more speculative. Some potential risks, like those associated with heating of the body, are well known. Canadian requirements control this by keeping the strength of the RF fields below the levels where heating could cause harm. Other potential risks are more speculative in nature. Scientists have determined that some biological effects can occur below the levels associated with heating, but experts agree that there is no clear evidence of actual harm associated with these effects. Research will continue, just as it does for many scientific questions.

Do the benefits outweigh the risks?

The Government of Canada is confident that the considerable benefits of wireless technology clearly outweigh what scientists conclude to be a very low potential for harm. There is, within the scientific community, a high degree of confidence that RF exposure from wireless communication devices, including cellphones and cell sites, is safe.

Canadians, even those who do not use wireless technology, benefit from the availability of wireless products and services. Canadian government scientists continue to monitor the scientific research to ensure that the safety requirements that protect all of us are up to date with scientific research.