



TO ALL NATIONAL COMMITTEES

TO ALL TECHNICAL COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES

Reference to electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure limits in IEC Standards

Background

The issue of lack of coherency in the use by the IEC community of electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure limits not applicable worldwide was raised and discussed at SMB level.

There is no international consensus on the exposure limits that must be used in order to protect against potential health hazards from electromagnetic fields. Two international organizations have established EMF exposure limits: the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE). Many national authorities have also established exposure limits (Japan, Australia, etc.).

In the IEC, TC 106 is responsible for developing truly international standards that describe methods for the assessment of electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields associated with human exposure that could be used by any national authority. To meet this objective, TC 106 standards must not include normative exposure limits or normative references that include exposure limits since exposure limits differ from one country to another. The same principle must also apply to any other IEC TCs or SCs that are developing standards on the measurement of EMFs.

Recommendations for implementation by all TCs/SCs

As a consequence of the above, the SMB is requesting all TCs/SCs to implement the following recommendations when making reference to electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure limits in their publications:

- 1) All TCs/SCs should avoid any reference to exposure limits in the normative sections of standards. However such exposure limits could be included in informative annexes.
- 2) When appropriate, a clear disclaimer statement on exposure limits will be put in the foreword and at the beginning of an informative annex containing exposure limits:

The exposure limits given in this informative annex are for information only, do not comprise an exhaustive list and are valid only in certain regions of the world. It is the responsibility of users of this standard to ensure that they use the current version of the limit values specified by the applicable national authorities.

NOTE It would be suitable to include more than a single set of exposure limits (for example ICNIRP, IEEE, etc.) in the informative annex of the standard.

Yours faithfully,

A. AMIT
General Secretary

MJC/RB