

C4ST's Reply to common statements from School Trustees re Wi-Fi in Schools

Trustee: Our use of Wi-Fi is well below the standards set by Health Canada.

C4ST: Safety Code 6 is Canada's limit for 'safe' cumulative exposure from all sources of RF emitting devices. Health Canada has not updated its' guideline since the 1979. It is based on tests performed on a 220 lb. mannequin with six minutes exposure. China, Russia, Italy and Switzerland have safety limits 100 times safer than Canada's. Some schools and libraries in France and Switzerland are removing Wi-Fi due to the harmful health effects.

In depending on Safety Code 6, we feel school board trustees should do enough due diligence to satisfy themselves that Safety Code 6 is current and reliable. C4ST does not believe Safety Code 6 is either.

The Parliamentary Health Committee, composed of MP's representing the Conservative, NDP and Liberal parties reported to the Government on June 17, 2015. The twelve recommendations contained in the report were unanimously approved by all parties. There are two sections of the Report that apply directly to the school environment. ⁱ

On page 26.

"Given the testimony that vulnerable groups, such as infants and young children, are being exposed to radiofrequency fields and the fact that other countries have taken protective measures, the Committee recommends

Recommendation 8

That an independent scientific body recognized by Health Canada examine whether measures taken and guidelines provided in other countries, such as France and Israel, to limit the exposure of vulnerable populations, including infants, and young children in the school environment, to radiofrequencies should be adopted in Canada."

and on page 28,

"The Committee agrees that children in schools should be protected from unnecessary exposure to wireless technology, particularly when alternative technologies exist. The Committee therefore recommends

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada develop an awareness campaign relating to the safe use of wireless technologies, such as cell phones and Wi-Fi, in key environments such as the school and home to ensure that Canadian families and children are reducing risks related to radiofrequency exposure."

Trustee: We do not have the resources to evaluate whether the technology is safe. We must rely on the provincial health authorities and Health Canada.

C4ST: As Board Trustees, you have the ability and the responsibility to regulate tighter restrictions. You do it for peanut allergies. Saanich DPSB in BC restricts Wi-Fi access.

Trustee: Wi-Fi is everywhere, Tim Horton's, MacDonald's, shopping malls. Kids are exposed anyways.

C4ST: There is a choice in visiting the above locations. Parents do not have a choice about their children attending school. In addition, the exposure at school is all day for several hours. Many parents chose not to expose their children to Wi-Fi in public or in their homes.

Trustee: I am not a technical person; I am relying on the recommendations from our IT department.

C4ST: IT expertise is the design, configuration, implementation and support of the Wi-Fi system. We are discussing issues that require expertise in health, biology and epidemiology. Your role as a member of a Board of Trustees is to deal directly with the appropriate and necessary skills and resources.

Trustee: I personally use several cell phones and I am ok.

C4ST: Children are not "little adults". Radiation from cell phones and other sources penetrates deeper into the head of children. Certain tissues of a child's head, e.g., the bone marrow and the eye, absorb significantly more energy than those in an adult head. Starting to use a cell phone before the age of 20 results in a 5 fold increase in glioma and acoustic neuroma.

Trustee: Canada has the same standards as the US, UK and Australia.

C4ST: Parents, teachers and students have not been adequately informed that Wi-Fi and all radiofrequency radiation has been on the World Health Organization's Class 2b List of Possible Carcinogens for more than two years (since May 2011). Lead and DDT are also included on this list. China, Russia, Italy and Switzerland have safety limits 100 times safer than Canada's.

Trustee: The World Health Organization designation does not include Wi-Fi.

C4ST: Incorrect. Wi-Fi is part of the WHO possible carcinogen warning list. In May, 2011 the World Health Organization classified radiofrequency radiation as "Class 2B possibly carcinogenic". This was confirmed by the Chair of the International Agency for Research on Cancer Dr. Jonathon Samet, who made the recommendation.

To understand the level of caution required, it is important to note that the Class 2b List identifies emerging hazards that are not yet fully understood. For example the Class 2b List of possible carcinogens also includes Lead, DDT and car exhaust. These are potentially harmful substances and agents that we now limit in the presence of children which is one of the purposes of the Class 2b List.

This fact was further re-confirmed by Dr. Robert Baan, a member of the IARC committee. Dr. Baan has stated that the "Possibly Carcinogenic" classification is not limited to cell phone radiation as erroneously communicated. In fact, says Dr. Baan, it "**holds for all types of radiation** within the radiofrequency part of the electromagnetic spectrum, **including** the radiation emitted by base-station antennas, radio/TV towers, radar, Wi-Fi, smart meters, etc."

Trustee: Pickles and coffee are also on the list of Class 2B, possible carcinogens

C4ST: The IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer) listing is “pickled vegetables” (not “pickles”). The listing pertains to a traditional Asian pickling process that includes potential carcinogenic chemicals. These particular pickles have been associated with stomach and dose- dependent esophageal cancers (Hong Kong, Japan, China).

<http://www.inchem.org/documents/iarc/vol56/02-pick.html>

There are over 250 agents and substances on the Class 2b List. A potential carcinogen is placed on the 2b list so that we pay attention and reduce our exposure to items on that list. We don't force-feed coffee to kindergarten children or other students for many hours per day, every day.

Trustee: The Wi-Fi Technology in our schools is the same as what is used in most homes today.

C4ST: The school systems are designed to operate hundreds of computers simultaneously, unlike home based consumer systems which only operate a handful of computers. Once many computers are tuned on, the microwave radiation becomes unbearable for some. It is scientifically accepted that children are more vulnerable to the biological effects of microwave exposure than adults.

Trustee: It is not possible to have a Wi-Fi free area in a school.

C4ST: Electrosensitivity exists. Based on the American Academy of Environmental Medicine's prediction, as many as 3% of students may show an immediate reaction to Wi-Fi technology. Similar to accommodating allergies in school, it is the responsibility of the Board to ensure the safety of students and teachers. The policy to deny accommodation to children affected by microwave radiation contravenes the human rights of children in Canada.

In October, 2011, Health Canada issued a cell phone use warning for children under 18 years of age. “Health Canada “encourages parents to reduce children's RF (radiofrequency radiation) exposure from cell phones since children are typically more sensitive to a variety of environmental agents.”

Wi-Fi is the same type of radiation as cell phones. Health Canada has been consistently late in reacting to harm to Canadians: asbestos, tobacco and BPA are some examples.

C4ST supports the use of technology in the classroom and applauds the creative use of digital resources, safely. The use of technology and access to the internet does not require the constant bombardment of children to microwave radiation.

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=8041315&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=2>