

Mobile phone repeaters

A guide for consumers

Do you use a mobile phone repeater or are thinking about buying one?

This fact sheet provides you with information about the law and what you can legally do to improve your mobile reception.



What is a mobile phone repeater?

A mobile phone repeater is a fixed radiocommunications device that is designed to wirelessly regenerate or replicate a mobile signal. These devices are used to improve the reliability of a mobile phone service in a poor signal level area.

Mobile phone repeaters are commonly used by mobile phone carriers (carriers) as part of their ordinary network management.

Can I operate a mobile phone repeater?

You can only operate a mobile phone repeater if you have been authorised by a carrier.

A person must not operate or possess (for the purpose of operation) a radiocommunications device, unless that person is authorised under either a spectrum, apparatus or class licence.

A mobile phone repeater operates within apparatus or spectrum-licensed radiofrequency bands licensed to mobile phone carriers. As such, to operate this device, you will require carrier permission under a third-party arrangement.

It is illegal to operate a repeater without carrier permission because this device has the capacity to cause substantial interference to the mobile network. This can occur because the device is not coordinated with other radiocommunications infrastructure in the mobile network.

It is an offence under the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* to operate an unlicensed radiocommunications device, or possess this device for the purpose of operation. A person found guilty of this offence may be imprisoned

for two years for each offence. A body corporate may receive a penalty of up to \$300,000 (1,500 penalty units) per offence (sections 46 and 47 of the Act). Other penalties may apply, such as the interference offence provisions at Part 4.2 of the Act.

How can I get the best possible reception from my mobile phone?

If you would like to improve the mobile phone reception at your home, it is suggested that you speak with your carrier. A number of carriers have products available that can be used by their customers to improve their mobile network coverage. These may include mobile phone repeaters.

For the best possible mobile phone reception in a vehicle, especially in rural areas, carriers recommend the use of a mobile phone hands-free car kit with an external vehicle-mounted high gain antenna.



What is the difference between a mobile phone repeater and a mobile phone booster?

The terms mobile phone boosters and mobile phone repeaters are sometimes used interchangeably, but under Australian law the difference is clear. A mobile phone booster uses a physical wired connection to a single mobile phone handset, while mobile phone repeaters are designed to communicate with multiple mobile handsets by means of radiofrequency energy.

The ACMA has declared mobile phone boosters as a prohibited piece of customer equipment under the Telecommunications (Prohibition of Mobile Phone Boosters) Declaration 2011.

Please note: this document is intended as a guide only and should not be relied on as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice in individual cases.

More information

- > See the ACMA fact sheet on [mobile phone boosters](#).
- > For information on the regulation for mobile phone repeaters, please contact the ACMA's Customer Service Centre on [1300 850 115](tel:1300850115) or info@acma.gov.au.
- > For information on mobile phone networks, contact your telephone company.
- > To keep up-to-date, follow us on [Twitter @acma_operations](#).