



## City, Town, and County Ordinances with Setbacks & Preferred Distances for Cell Towers



**Many communities have adopted preferred distance and setback policies to restrict cell tower placement near homes and schools.**

Note: To comply with FCC law, several ordinances include flexibility if strict application would effectively prohibit service.

- **Encinitas, CA:** 500 feet from schools, homes, and daycares
- **Williamson County, TN:** 1,500 ft from schools
- **Copake, NY:** 1,500 ft from homes/schools
- **Sallisaw, OK:** 1,500 ft from homes
- **Walnut Creek, CA:** 1,500 ft from schools
- **Calabasas, CA:** 1,000 ft from homes/schools
- **Scarsdale, NY:** 500 ft from homes/schools
- **San Diego County, CA:** 300 ft from schools
- **Bedford, NH:** 750 ft from residential property
- **Bar Harbor, ME:** 1,500 ft from schools
- **Shelburne, MA:** 3,000 ft from schools, 1,500 ft from homes
- **Davis, CA:** 500 ft from residential zone and schools
- **Westlake Village, CA:** 500 feet of homes
- **Randolph, MA:** 500 ft from homes
- **Petaluma, CA:** no “small cell” antennas within 500 ft of homes
- **Suisin City, CA:** no “small cell” antennas within 500 ft of homes
- **Contra Costa County, CA:** no new high-visibility facilities or towers within 300 ft of residential zones
- **Woodstock, NY:** 300 ft from any residential structure unless the small cell is co-located on an existing facility
- **Ithaca NY:** 250 ft from homes, schools, daycares
- **Arcata City, CA:** 1000 ft from homes

### New York State Department of State, “Tips for Regulating Telecommunications Facilities”



“Tip: Be diligent in review about distance people will be from radiation. Example from Hempstead in which RF engineer tested a proposed facility that complied, based on claim that general public would be 80 feet from tower. But it was discovered towers were being mounted only a few feet from inhabitants of a top floor apartment...Towers far from residences result in least harmful exposure.”

“Facilities towering over nearby residences can lower value of those nearby homes by 5 – 20%.”

“If towers are too close, potential buyers are unable to secure FHA [Federal Housing Administration] federally guaranteed loans.”



# Researchers Recommend Keeping A Distance Between Cell Towers, Homes, and Schools

## The T-Mobile Funded Ecolog Report

As far back as 2000, the Ecolog Institute Report commissioned by T-Mobile reviewed the research on RF radiation and cancer as well as impacts to the endocrine, neurological and reproductive systems and recommended an exposure limit 1,000 times lower than the FCC's current power density limit.

**“This should be rigorously adhered to by all base stations near sensitive places such as residential areas, schools, nurseries, playgrounds, hospitals and all other places at which humans are present for longer than 4 hours.”**

**- The Ecolog Institute Report**

## Published Studies Recommend A Distance

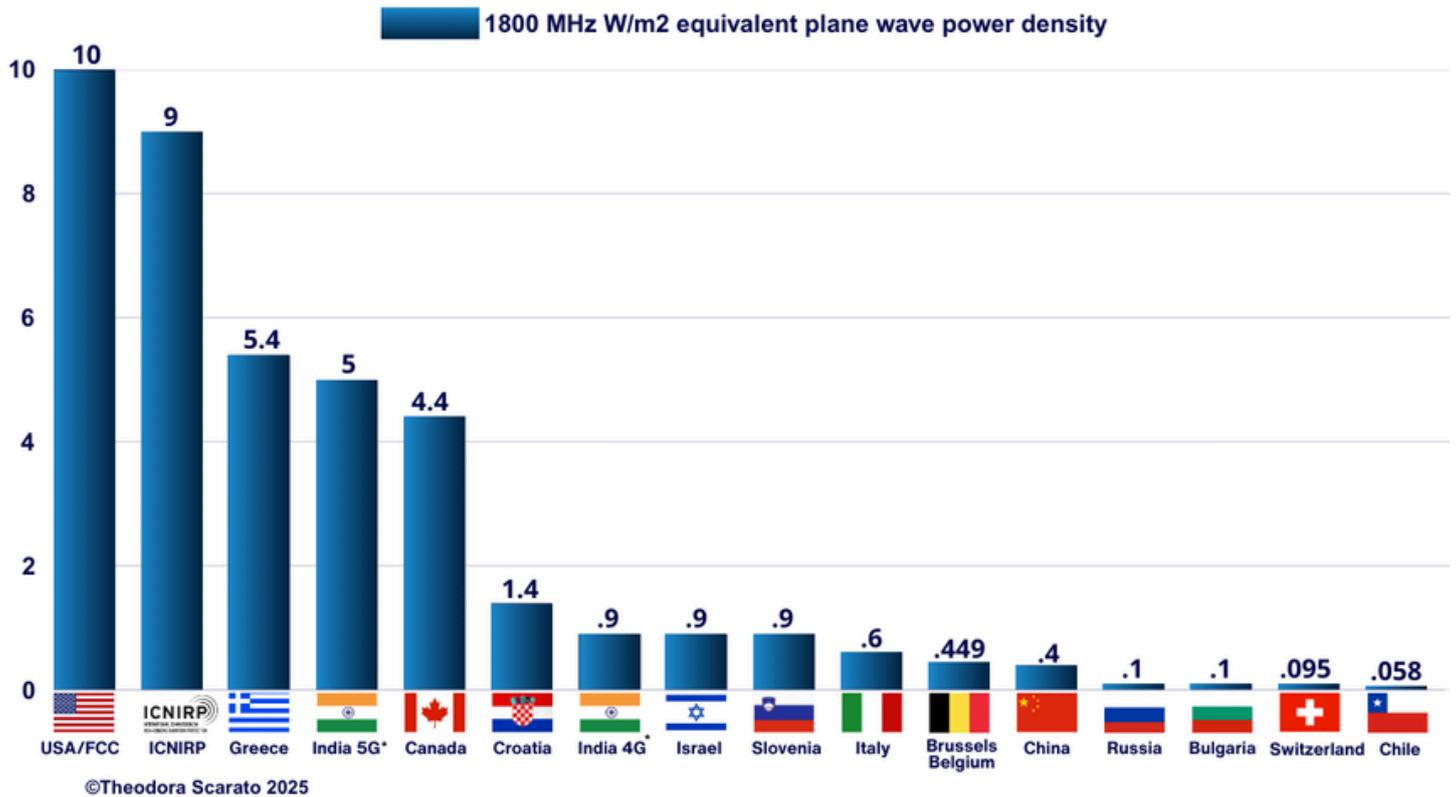
Numerous studies have documented a higher prevalence and severity of health-related issues close to cell towers and wireless base station antennas. Thus, multiple peer-reviewed research articles recommend keeping cell towers at least 500 meters (approximately 1,500 feet) away from populated areas to reduce health risks, including:

- ✓ **Pearce (2024)** in *Environmental Research* advises base stations be placed no closer than 500 meters to minimize public RF exposure and decrease liability.
- ✓ **Rodrigues et al. (2021)** in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* recommends deactivating towers within 500 meters of homes, workplaces, hospitals, & schools.
- ✓ **Yakymenko (2011)** in *Experimental Oncology* reviewed dozens of studies concluding that current human exposure limits need a re-evaluation and everyday exposures should be minimized.
- ✓ **Dode et al. (2011)** in *Science of the Total Environment* found increased tumor-related deaths within 500 meters of cellular base stations in Brazil, stating “More restrictive limits must be adopted urgently.”
- ✓ **Levitt & Lai (2010)** in *Environmental Reviews* reviewed 100 studies on cell infrastructure and found about 80% showed biological effects, stating “As a general guideline, cell base stations should not be located less than 1,500 feet from the population, and at a height of about 150 feet.”
- ✓ **Khurana et al. (2010)** in the *International Journal of Occupational Environmental Health* found that 8 out of 10 epidemiological studies reported higher rates of cancer or neurobehavioral symptoms within 500 meters of cell tower base stations.

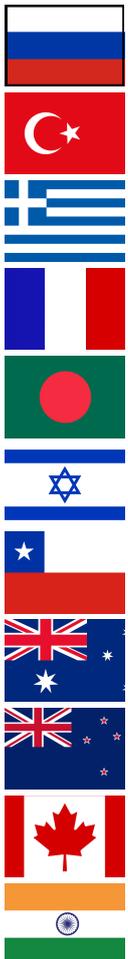


The United States allows higher levels of cell tower radiation in the environment than several other countries. Many nations—including Italy, Switzerland, China, and Russia—have adopted far stricter regulations for sensitive areas, including schools and where children live.

## CELL TOWER RF RADIATION LIMITS FOR SCHOOLS & HOMES



## International Policies To Ban Cell Towers At Schools



**Russia:** Antennas for cell towers and base stations are no longer permitted near schools, with a national plan in place to relocate existing sites away from schools.

**Türkiye:** Cell antennas must be distanced from schools and playgrounds.

**Greece:** Towers are banned on school grounds. Stricter RF limits apply within a 300-meter radius around kindergartens, schools, hospitals, and elderly care facilities.

**France:** For towers or wireless facilities within 100 meters of schools, daycare centers, or healthcare establishments, levels must be minimized.

**Bangladesh:** Cell towers are prohibited on residential properties, schools, colleges, playing fields, densely populated areas, and heritage sites.

**Israel:** Minimum setback of 100 meters required for cell towers near schools and homes.

**Chile:** Cell antennas not allowed in “sensitive areas” (kindergartens, hospitals, and nursing homes).

**Queensland, Australia:** New cell towers prohibited on school property, with a 200-meter setback and emissions capped at no more than 1% of federal guidelines.

**New Zealand:** Cell towers prohibited on school property plus a 50 meter setback.

**Toronto, Canada:** A "Prudent Avoidance Policy" recommends keeping RF exposures at least 100 times below Health Canada’s guidelines.

**India:** In Mumbai, Zilla Parishad, Rajasthan & Karnataka, cell towers are prohibited/removed near schools, colleges, orphanages, and old age homes

\*Click on country or policy for hyperlink to source.



# U.S. Policies Restricting Cell Towers Near Schools

“In promoting the health and safety of students and staff and in compliance with its duty to provide an environment free from life hazards, new wireless telecommunication transmitter installations are prohibited on all school premises...the District shall not extend or renew such leases.”

## -Temecula Valley Unified Policy Prohibiting New Cell Towers

### School Districts Have Banned New Cell Towers

The U.S. lacks federal regulations to ensure a distance between cell towers, homes, and schools. However, some local school districts and communities have banned new cell towers at schools.

- ✓ **Temecula Valley Unified (CA):** Passed a **resolution** and **policy** prohibiting new towers and lease renewals as well as ensuring regular RF radiation measurements of existing towers.
- ✓ **Los Angeles Unified (CA):** Passed three resolutions banning cell towers at schools, including one that set a **“cautionary level”** for radiofrequency radiation at 10,000 times lower than US federal limits for public exposure.
- ✓ **Palo Alto Unified (CA):** Passed a resolution opposed to new cell towers at schools and in favor of a 1,500 foot setback.
- ✓ **Portland Public Schools (OR):** Stopped considering new leases for cell towers.
- ✓ **Montgomery County (MD):** Stopped new cell towers at elementary schools.
- ✓ **West Linn-Wilsonville School District (OR):** Prohibits towers on school property and opposes proposals for towers near schools.
- ✓ **Prince George’s County (MD):** Did not renew cell tower leasing agreement.
- ✓ **Greenbelt City Council (MD):** Issued opposition to cell towers at schools.
- ✓ **Loudoun County School Board (VA):** Prohibited new towers for 5 years.
- ✓ **The San Jose Catholic Diocese (CA):** halted new contracts for telecommunications companies with schools and churches.

*\*Click on bolded text for hyperlink to source.*



# Parent Teacher Associations Opposed to Cell Towers



## New York State PTA

Adopted TWO Resolutions in 2014

“CELLULAR PHONE TOWERS – 2014 (R-'07, R-'00); Resolved that the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. support legislation that would encourage local communities, including parents and school officials, to regulate the placement of cell towers and cell tower antennas particularly in schools and areas where children congregate,

and be it further Resolved that the New York State PTA support continued research into the long-term effects of radio frequency and microwave frequencies on humans especially as they apply to children, and be it further Resolved that the New York State PTA seek to educate parents and school officials as to the current debate over the placement of cell towers and antennas.”

## Neelsville Middle School Middle School

- Voted to oppose the proposed cell tower.
- Hosted parent information session with both the cell tower company and experts.

## Hillsmere Elementary School MD PTA

- Sent letters to the school board in opposition to cell towers near the school.

## Briarlake Georgia PTA

- Voted to oppose cell tower after board approved towers on schools.

*\*Click on bolded text for hyperlink to source.*

## Conejo CA PTA

Op-ed in *Thousand Oaks Acorn Journal*

“The California PTA advocates on behalf of children and families. They advocate against electromagnetic field radiation in schools.”

“The Conejo PTA urges the use of the precautionary principle in making decisions regarding public health. This means if something cannot be proven to be safe it is best to avoid exposure. Most people don't realize that the 1996 FCC state standards for safe levels of emission was actually based on a level set by the American national standards institute in 1982. Well this standard has not been changed in 30 years it has usurped all local authority.”

"For this reason, Conejo Council PTA made up of 9000 parents and teachers has decided to take action. We're calling on our local leaders to put in place policies that would ensure parents are notified when cell towers are proposed near schools and then encourage a buffer zone around schools."

-Kim Huber, legislative chair of the Conejo Council PTA.

## Forest Grove Elementary PTA, Pacific Grove Middle School PTA, & Pacific Grove High School PTA

All three PTAs sent a letter to their City Council in 2019 opposing a high school cell tower.