

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Multi-Band Approval/SAE?

A: It corresponds to a public policy promoted by SUBTEL, translated into a set of sectoral regulations, which requires that all mobile phones to be marketed in the country comply with a homologation process (technical tests), through which it must be verified that the phone:

1. Receive the messages from the Emergency Alert System sent by ONEMI (SAE), consisting of those warnings that allow the population to be alerted when there are risks due to some phenomenon, natural or not, that may put their lives at risk (tsunamis, avalanches, eruptions, etc.).
2. Operates in all available frequency bands in at least one of the mobile technologies (2G, 3G and/or 4G).
3. Is unlocked for use on any mobile carrier in the country. That is, it must work with any mobile company and not only with the one that originally operated.

Q: How do I know when I buy a phone that it complies with the above?

A: Because the phone must have a seal indicating whether or not it is compatible with all the frequency bands of the different mobile technologies (2G, 3G and/or 4G).

In fact, in each technology (2G, 3G or 4G) each mobile company is assigned different frequency bands. Therefore, the fact that a phone has a seal that says 2G, indicates that it has all the bands of that technology, so that when its owner portrays it to any company with 2G, it will work without problems. The same goes for the other two technologies, 3G and 4G.

For its part, a phone with the 2G, 3G and 4G seal ensures that it will work on all technologies in all companies.

However, this does not mean that all equipment has to be tested individually in a technical procedure, since this would be impracticable; It is the model of the respective equipment (hardware and software) that is tested and, according to the results, all the corresponding units are labeled for commercialization.

Q: And what is a frequency band?

A: Wireless communications are carried out over the air using the radio spectrum. Broadcasting, television, amateur radio, mobile and other communications are carried out there. A band is a portion of the radio spectrum used by mobile companies for their communications in each technology.

Q: From when will Multi-Band/SAE Approval apply?

A: The Multiband/SAE Approval standard will begin to be applied from September 23, 2017, so that from that date all phones that are marketed in the country must comply with the above.

Q: Why are there phones that are already sold with a seal today?

A: The Multiband/SAE Approval standard contemplates a first stage that began on March 13, 2017, the date from which mobile companies must put a seal on each phone they sell, through which they inform whether it operates in all bands of each of the 3 technologies: 2G, 3G, 4G. In this "transitional" stage, it is not yet required that the telephones be compatible with SAE, nor that the models of each terminal be subjected to the approval procedure.

As of September 23, the terminals for sale must have undergone a homologation process, through which the technology or technologies in which the phone operates with all bands will be technically checked, and the mandatory compatibility with SAE. As a result of the above, he will change the seal for a definitive one that reflects both characteristics.

Q: What is the purpose of knowing the support of bands by technology informed on the label?

A: The Multiband/SAE seal is an indicator that shows, among other aspects, the technical compatibility of said phone with the different frequency bands that mobile companies use to provide their services in Chile.

In this way we seek:

Provide the user with certainty regarding the current or future compatibility of the phone they plan to purchase, promoting the choice of devices that can be used without problems in all mobile companies, with the option of carrying the company without risks due to phone limitations, and In the case of those isolated localities where there is only one mobile company operating in a specific frequency band, the user should not be exposed to their telephone not working.

Q: How do I read the stamp?

A: The seal is easy to read and understand, and the presence or absence of X on the technologies indicated on it shows in a didactic and understandable way whether the phone is fully compatible with national networks or not.

For example, if there is an X on a technology in the label, it means that the phone we are acquiring does not work in all the bands used in Chile for that technology.

Q: What happens if I buy a phone without a stamp on September 23rd?

A: As of September 23, all equipment marketed in Chile must carry the definitive seal, which indicates that its technical model was subjected to a homologation process, the results of which must be reflected in said final seal.

In fact, once the process has been completed, the terminal will be incorporated into a centralized system of approved equipment, before being marketed. Equipment that is not incorporated into this system will not work in any of the country's mobile companies.

If despite the above you notice that you were also sold a phone without a seal, you can go to the Undersecretary of Telecommunications or SERNAC to report and claim this situation, depending on whether the phone was sold by a telecommunications company or not (retail, distributors, etc.).

Q: What about phones that were working before September 23rd?

A: They will continue to operate smoothly, as they will be incorporated into a system of equipment classified as "historic". To this end, all equipment that has made or received calls in any of the country's mobile companies in a period of 5 years prior to September 23 will be registered.

Therefore, if you have a phone that you have not used in many years and you want it to continue working, you must make at least one call before September 23, and it will be automatically recognized by mobile networks.

Q: Are all these obligations only for mobile companies?

A: No, this new regulation is applicable to any company that as of September 23 sells telephone equipment in Chile. All must approve them so that they can be registered in the corresponding base.

Q: What happens from September 23 if I want to buy or bring a phone from abroad?

A: From September 23 these phones must also be registered in the system.

For this there is a procedure called administrative registration, which is aimed only at natural people who have acquired a mobile phone abroad for their personal use.

This administrative registration can be done in person or remotely at one of the certifying companies that are published on the SUBTEL website www.multibanda.cl.

To carry out the procedure, it is necessary to be a natural person and reasonably prove that you have acquired the equipment abroad. The details of the required documents must be requested from the certifying companies.

However, the aforementioned administrative registration, whose sole purpose is the registration of the telephone equipment in the system so that it can operate in the network of mobile companies, does not certify, enable or accredit that a piece of equipment has SAE and all the bands and/or technologies that the seller has indicated, since this is part of another process called homologation.

Q: And does this administrative registration have a cost?

A: There is no cost, as long as it is not more than one team per natural person per year.

Q: I will travel to Chile in the next few days. Can I use my phone with a local SIM Card if my phone is unlocked, or can I only use it while roaming?

A: Phones brought by people who have services from other international operators and who use them in roaming mode can continue to use them without problems after September 23.

However, if you want to use the phone with a Sim Card from a Chilean mobile company, you must make the administrative registration of it.

Q: Will phone prices go up because of this regulation?

A: No. There are many factors that determine the price of phones in the market. Multi-band regulations are not one of them.

The regulations today favor the arrival of phones that can work in all the bands that are being used in Chile. This will generate dynamism in the industry and eliminate the uncertainty regarding whether a phone will work in any national company, which will make the already healthy process of mobile number portability even easier, as it will introduce more competition and, therefore, benefits for users.

Q: From September 23, will phones in Chile work automatically on all bands?

A: No. The regulations require that the phones that are marketed in the country show in a simple way – through the respective seal – the technologies that they fully support, but it does not require that all phones be compatible with all bands. The different measures to be implemented will indicate when we are in the presence of fully compatible equipment, or if its compatibility is limited in any technology in use at the national level.

Notwithstanding the above, what is mandatory is that the phones work in all the frequency bands available in at least one of the mobile technologies (2G, 3G and/or 4G).

Q: What about the other devices, which are not phones, and which occupy the network of mobile companies?

A: While these devices do not require homologation (they are not technically tested), they must also be enrolled in the equipment system in order for them to operate.

In the case of equipment in operation before September 23, and as for telephones, they will be automatically incorporated into the system by mobile companies.

Equipment that is marketed from September 23 must be registered through a certifying company (www.multibanda.cl). The certifying companies will request the background information that allows them to identify the type of device they want to register.

Without registration, there is no service.

Q: I am a foreigner, I am passing through Chile and I want to use a local SIM Card. What do I do?

A: As with equipment brought in from abroad, in order to work on a domestic mobile carrier, the phone will have to be registered in the system to work. This procedure can be carried out through an administrative procedure via the internet that you can do before traveling, or in person before the certifiers.

Q: I am a foreigner, I am passing through Chile and I want to use my phone through Roaming.

A: International roaming users passing through Chile do not need to register or certify their equipment to traffic on national networks.

Q: I have a phone that I haven't activated on the network for more than 5 years, and after September 23 it no longer works. What do I do to make it work?

A: If a phone has not been used for the last 5 years (call traffic, data, messages) it will not work after September 23rd. As they do not comply with the regulations that come into force that day, they will not be able to be activated in Chile.

Q: I am a natural person. With this regulation, will I no longer be able to buy my phone abroad to use in Chile?

A: The implementation of the Multiband/SAE regulation does not impose a limitation on bringing your phone from abroad, but you must register it for recognition by mobile networks.

Q: I want to buy a phone abroad. What should I look for before doing it to be able to use it on any mobile network in the country?

A: To date, 2G, 3G and 4G technologies are officially implemented, following international standards in our country, in the following bands:

2G – 850 MHz / 900 MHz / 1900 MHz

3G – 850 MHz / 900 MHz / 1900 MHz / AWS (1700-2100 MHz)

4G – 700 MHz / 2600 MHz / AWS (1700-2100 MHz)

If you make sure that the phone you buy abroad is compatible with these bands, you ensure access to all the technologies available in Chile and you will not have problems when you want to exercise your right to portray yourself. However, it's important to remember that if you decide to use a phone purchased abroad, you may not receive SAE messages.

Q: And if I buy it in Chile, is there any case in which I must register it and not the certifying company?

A: No, whether you buy a new phone in formal commerce, or whether you buy it from an importer, the equipment should be registered prior to its commercialization, since this (that it is registered once the Multiband/SAE Homologation process has been completed) is the responsibility of the one who sells the device and which is precisely what the seal accounts for.

On the other hand, if the phone is used, just because it has carried traffic on the mobile networks before September 23, they should recognize it and it should work without problems. If it has been used after September 23, the fact that it has been able to carry traffic on mobile networks means that it was properly registered at the time. The important thing is always to make sure of the legitimate origin of the phone.

However, if you buy a phone in informal shops, it may happen that the equipment does not work, not only because it is not registered but also because it has not complied with the Multiband/SAE Approval process, and in that case you will not be able to register it.

Finally, and for the adequate information of the population, mobile telephone companies must enable mechanisms for the identification of equipment through their websites, allowing interested parties to know – only by entering the IMEI of the respective telephone and as long as said equipment has been marketed as of September 23 – the characteristics of the same.

Q: I bought a phone abroad and it failed in the warranty period, so they sent me a new one. Do I need to re-enroll it?

A: Yes. A replacement phone will have a different IMEI than the one previously registered, so you must re-enroll it. Keep in mind that, as it is a second phone in less than 12 months, this procedure could have a cost.

Q: My phone is compatible with all bands and is approved, but there are areas where I do not receive a signal or cannot generate calls. What's going on?

A: It's important to understand that full compatibility doesn't ensure that you have nationwide service. This is explained by the coverage the company providing the service may have, in addition to a number of other environmental factors that can degrade the quality of the network usage experience. Your operator has a coverage map by technology, which you can see on their website. If you can't find it, demand it through their means of contact.

Q: I bought a phone after September 23 that claimed to be compatible with all bands in use in Chile; however, this is not the case. What rights do I have as a consumer?

A: A phone sold in Chile since September 23 had to be certified in its technical capabilities, which are reflected in its multi-band seal. If the equipment in question does not have the characteristics indicated by the seal, the Consumer Law protects you to exercise exchanges and returns as appropriate. The foregoing is without prejudice to the actions that may be taken by the Undersecretariat of Telecommunications with respect to non-compliance with the approval process detected.

Q: What will happen if a new technology is implemented for mobile services?

A: Considering that the industry we regulate is very dynamic, the Multiband/SAE regulation contemplates mechanisms and deadlines to reflect the changes that may occur in the implementation of bands for new mobile technologies.

At the time of the implementation of a new technology, the Undersecretary of Telecommunications will establish the regulatory changes in order to inform the public in advance about these modifications.

Q: What is the Emergency Alert System?

A: The Emergency Alert System (EAS) allows ONEMI to send a mass alert through special channels, which will be manifested through a pop-up message, a distinctive sound and recurrent vibration that are very difficult to ignore, in the event of a tsunami risk after larger earthquakes or in volcanic eruptions and floods, among other emergencies determined by ONEMI by virtue of its competence.

Q: So, as of September 23, will all mobile phones in Chile receive the emergency alert sent by ONEMI (SAE)?

A: As a result of the Multiband/SAE Homologation, the models corresponding to all mobile phones marketed in Chile should have undergone a homologation process, which among other things seeks to verify that the phones:

1. Receive the Emergency Alert message regardless of the company providing the service.
2. Display the message on the screen in a certain way and accompany a sound and vibration whose characteristics make it difficult to ignore.

Therefore, all equipment marketed in Chile as of September 23 will receive the alert message in the manner indicated above, regardless of the company that provides the service and even if its owner has behaved.

However, phones marketed before that date and unless they have the definitive seal -, could be in one of the following situations:

- (i) Receiving the SAE message in a different way, without the established requirements (such as a simple SMS, for example), which may go unnoticed by the user.
- (ii) Not receiving the SAE message.
- (iii) Receive the SAE message under conditions very similar to those of approved telephones.

Q: What do I need to do to receive the message?

A: You simply have to have your phone turned on and with wireless coverage, even if it's not your carrier's. Network saturation does not affect the sending of such a message.