

The phone even Naomi can't break

£250 gadget can survive shocks, ice and the fury of supermodels

Mark Prigg

Technology Correspondent

IT IS billed as the first "indestructible" mobile phone on sale in Britain.

Impervious to dust, dirt and shocks, it can be dropped from six feet on to concrete. It will work a metre underwater, in -20C conditions and cope with short bursts of 100C heat.

The phone should survive angry outbursts from supermodel Naomi Campbell, who has admitted in court throwing hers at her assistant.

It could also be just the thing for Downing Street – one Labour MP claims Prime Minister Gordon Brown broke three handsets in a week by throwing them against the wall.

Covered in a tough rubber coating, the phone has even been approved for use by the military.

Today, Tesco said it has been inundated with orders for the £250 phone, which went on sale this week.

A new study found that on average, one in three young people breaks a handset during summer months, costing users £157 million each year for replacements.

Tesco said it hoped the new handset, which was designed by Land Rover and comes with a three-year unconditional guarantee, could help save people money.

"Our research shows that summer holidays can be holidays from hell for mobile phones," said Lance Batchelor of Tesco Mobile.

"The new, virtually indestructible Land Rover S1 phone by Sonim is the first in the world to be as tough as a Land Rover and is the world's only military-rated mobile phone – making it resistant to humidity, dust, shock, salt and heat.

"Add to that water resistance, the ability to survive drops on to concrete, extreme temperatures and resistance against drops into the nastiness of public lavatories and you have the most resilient phone in the world."

Lindsay Weaver, from Land Rover, said: "Like our vehicles, this phone is extremely capable and will work in the toughest of environments.

"It is made from hardened plastic which is injection-moulded to the handset, and water, oil and petrol-resistant. This is covered with a hardened rubber allowing the phone to withstand drops.

"A non-porous coating is applied to stop anything penetrating the case. It has hardened rubber keys and a scratch-resistant screen."



Indestructible: the mobile has been dubbed the world's most resilient, and will stand up to users like Naomi Campbell, left, who threw a phone at her aide

... and we really tried our hardest as well

MOBILE phones seem to break down on me every six months.

I'm not sure if it's the fact that I tend to accidentally drop them, leave them in steam-filled bathrooms or take them to muddy festivals, but they expire on me like clockwork. So the chance to put an "indestructible" phone to the test was too good an opportunity to miss.

Robust, reinforced and strong (read chunky, rugged and walkie-talkie-esque), the Land Rover Sonim is not a dainty handset. But then its target audience isn't wearing ballet pumps.

We started with a game of "kick the phone" in a supermarket car park. Cue drop kicks, collisions with trolleys and several squashings by befuddled shoppers. Result: minimal scratching of rubberised shell.

Moving on to the road test. We reversed, accelerated and emergency stopped over the handset. Result: cracked camera lens, minor scratching.

Our scratch test also produced

Daisy Dumas



impressive results. Keys, steel prongs and safety pins made very little impression. Two very minor lines were just about visible.

On to submersion exercises. We dunked the phone into a particularly toxic hair gel for six hours. Result: very slimy keys but no other change. We left it out in the rain overnight. Result: no change.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes is supposedly a fan. But failing a trip to the slopes of Everest, I left the phone in the freezer for eight hours. Result: switched itself off, but turned on with ease after warming up.

Doggedly determined to destroy, I poured boiling water over the handset. Result: no change. Unbelievable. It is now sitting in the cooling water. Its shining screen, complete with rugged backdrop, stares up at me mockingly.



Tough: the Sonim survived drop kicks, being run over and boiling water

US bishops agree gay marriages

Danny Brierley

BISHOPS in the US have agreed in principle to services for same-sex partnerships, a move described as a severe blow to hopes of worldwide unity for the Anglican Church.

The bishops voted 104-30 at the Episcopal General Convention in Anaheim, California, to "collect and develop theological resources and liturgies" for blessing same-gender relationships, to

be considered at the next convention in 2012. The decision was prompted by the increasing number of US states that allow gay marriages, domestic partnerships and civil unions. It was passed hours after the Church voted to allow the consecration of gay bishops.

The looming schism will put the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, under intense scrutiny. Lambeth Palace refused to comment on the vote.

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