Amateur Radio
Emergency Telecommunications for Disaster Management

SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE

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• What is Amateur Radio?

• Amateur Radio is described as a Self Training Exercise in two way Radio Communications. Some people call it an interesting hobby enjoyed by more than 3 million people throughout the world.

• Amateur Radio operators see themselves as not only experimenters of Radio Signals through which they have developed their skills to communicate with others who share a similar interest all over the world, but in time of disaster to use their skills, enthusiasm, their own resources and dedication to serve their community.
Fig. 2-14. Skip propagation.
Tsunami

Never heard before

40,000 dead, over 1 million displaced

- Government/Emergency services unable to cope
- Contact lost with coastal towns, Telecom services down, coastal road washed away
RSSL - when Tsunami struck

- 120 licensed members (35 active)
- No office / operations building and equipment
- No vehicles or transportation
- In the process of formulating disaster preparedness plan
Action taken

- Contact established with Prime Minister’s office
- Mobilised members
- Teams left Colombo for coastal towns to set up communication points
Challenges

- Access Roads – Damaged
- Power Supply - Disrupted
- Telephone /Mobile phone Service – Damaged/Congested
- Complete isolation of affected areas
Communication Points

- 40m – 7.060 MHz (daytime) 3.780 MHz (night time)
- Vehicle Batteries (12V) – No power supply
- Tx Power – 5W, Battery operated
- Mobile unit using VHF through a repeater
- Medical/relief traffic terminated at Disaster Management Centre at Prime Ministers Residence
HAMBANTOTA GA’S OFFICE
Situation in Disaster Areas

- No food / water / shelter
- Lack of law and order
- Panic and chaos
- Threat of diseases and epidemics
- Lack of coordination in relief operations
Strengths

- Dedicated and committed volunteers
- Experienced radio operators
- Active Radio Amateurs willing to use their own equipment for disaster relief operations
- Prompt assistance from foreign Hams and pledges of funds and equipment
- Self contained service having a network of their own, through HF and VHF radio
Lessons learnt

- Ensure adequate supplies (fuel, batteries, backup rigs, supplies)
- Be self-sufficient (take food, water, etc)
- Transmit accurate and authentic traffic
- Arrange additional teams to relieve operators
Improvements

- Stations should be initiated at regional level
- Liaise with Government/Authorities
- Training for relief disaster operations
- Conduct simulated exercises
- Prepare training manual
Future Strategy

- Comprehensive Disaster Preparedness Programme liaising with Government.
- Connection to Echolink Network.
- Communication points throughout the country.
- Establishing Repeaters to cover entire country.
- Offering Services to other interested organizations
- Training at school level – Scouts and Girl Guides
Training Girl Guides
Q & A

http://www.qsl.net/rssl

Thank you