



DECISION DOCUMENT

Subject:

Tolerance policy satellite communication equipment and services for disaster recovery in Sint Maarten.

Purpose:

This document confirms that Bureau Telecommunications and Post Sint Maarten (BTP) will tolerate the use of unlicensed satellite communication equipment and services (*phone and data*) in Sint Maarten for the purpose of disaster recovery, in support of the Emergency Operation Center (EOC).

Elucidation:

In disaster situations, announced under the National Ordinance of Disaster Relief, unrestricted access to satellite services is critical. As a result, BTP will not enforce regulations against unlicensed satellite service providers during times of calamity.

Confirmation:

The Director of BTP hereby introduces its tolerance policy which:

- (i) confirms no enforcement of the prohibition to provide satellite communication services without a license to the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) and Emergency Support Functions (ESF) to maintain or establish critical communication capabilities during or after a disaster when traditional communication networks are compromised; and
- (ii) confirms its non-objection to the use of satellite communication equipment and services in Sint Maarten by the EOC and ESF to maintain or establish critical communication capabilities during or after a disaster when traditional communication networks are compromised.

This confirmation is applicable in case of a disaster for the following entities and scenarios:

1. EOC:

Satellite communication devices and services may be utilized by the EOC of Sint Maarten to ensure continuous communication during and after a disaster when traditional communication networks may be compromised.

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2. ESF and EOC support organizations:

ESF units and other units in direct support of the EOC may use satellite communication devices and services to maintain critical communication capabilities during and after a disaster when traditional communication networks may be compromised.

3. Relief organizations:

National, regional, and international relief organizations assisting Sint Maarten in disaster recovery may use satellite communication devices and services to support humanitarian aid efforts. Telecommunication relief organizations are permitted to establish satellite communication links using their own equipment to enable emergency communication with the outside world. This will assist the EOC in coordinating recovery efforts and temporarily help the community maintain connections locally, regionally, and internationally.

Conditions of use:

- The use of satellite communication devices is strictly limited to emergency situations. It may function as a fallback option when other communication methods are unavailable or unreliable.
- For category 3, relief organizations, this authorization is of a temporary nature and will be effective in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Once the EOC declares that normal communication channels have been restored and are stable, the use of satellite communication devices must cease.

Declaration of a disaster:

The authority to declare a disaster or issue a high-alert warning in anticipation of a foreseeable disaster rests solely with the Prime Minister of Sint Maarten. Based on the projected impact of the situation, the Prime Minister may activate the EOC, thereby initiating the procedures outlined in this policy.

Furthermore, this policy may also be enacted at the discretion of the National Disaster Coordinator of Sint Maarten, if deemed necessary to safeguard public safety and welfare.

Importance of communication in disaster recovery:

The ability to communicate during and after a disaster is critical for the safety, security, and well-being of the residents of Sint Maarten. Efficient communication is essential for coordinating relief efforts, ensuring the flow of

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accurate information, and restoring the island's economy and public services. By authorizing the use of satellite communication devices for emergency communication, we are taking a crucial step toward safeguarding the island's resilience in the face of disasters.

The human factor in disaster recovery cannot be understated. Clear and continuous communication saves lives, enables quick response efforts, and supports emotional well-being by connecting people with their loved ones during crises.

Conclusion:

This decision underscores the importance of maintaining robust communication capabilities during disaster recovery efforts in Sint Maarten. The tolerated use of satellite communication devices and services is a proactive measure to ensure that communication lines remain open, supporting effective disaster management and the timely recovery of the island.

Approved by:
Bureau Telecommunications and Post Sint Maarten

A blue ink signature of Judianne Labega-Hoeve, written in a cursive style.

Judianne Labega-Hoeve
Interim Director
September 26th, 2024

Co-signed by:
The Government of Sint Maarten

A blue ink signature of Clive Richardson, written in a cursive style.

Clive Richardson
National Disaster Coordinator
September 26th, 2024