

*The cabinet has recently approved the **Barbados Use of Satellite Telephone Policy** as follows:*

## **Barbados Use of Satellite Telephone Policy**

**Policy in accordance with sections 4 (2)(b) and 4 (2)(f) of the Telecommunications Act 2001-36.**

-

This document summarizes the technology and proposes regulation for the use of satellite telephones in Barbados or by long line fishing boats registered in Barbados or by approved Government agencies, as established by The Ministry Responsible for Telecommunications.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**A satellite telephone is a special kind of mobile telephone that is designed to permit voice and data transmission via satellite. This category of telephone allow users to make and receive calls from anywhere on the globe. In addition to voice calls, most satellite phones are also capable of sending and receiving emails and text messages. Over the last few years the use of satellite telephones has been on the increase, they are now cheaper and more available than at any time in the past. For the purpose of deep-sea fishing, the data is received by using a computer connected to a Satellite Telephone handset.**

### **2. SCOPE**

Unlike most other mobile telephones, satellite telephones do not rely on cell towers and cell sites that require cell stations every few kilometres. Satellite telephones generally complement existing cellular networks, especially in sparsely populated regions where it is not commercially feasible

to build telecommunications infrastructure, these telephones are of great benefit in such circumstances.

Some hybrid mobile telephones can use either satellites or conventional cellular networks. This type of service will help to bridge the gap many users experience when they roam from one city to another and suddenly lose their connection.

The geographical independency of satellite telephones more often than not result in reliable and consistent coverage. However because a clear line of sight is essential between the antenna and satellite, performance can be affected by poor weather, and use is generally restricted to the outdoors. Reliable and consistent coverage by satellite telephones is only possible for outdoor coverage where there is no vertical obstruction to the radio path. Buildings, trees, car roofs etc. all have an impact upon the coverage provided. One of the key things to consider when calling a satellite telephone is that you may have to dial an international access code to get through. That also means that you may have to pay long distance charges even though the person you are calling may be in the same area. This may require the use of equal/indirect access which has not yet been approved. The access code should be obtained from the holder of a Barbados International Service Provider and Carrier licences, on presentation of a letter signed by the Chief Telecommunications Officer certifying that the user has been authorised to use Satellite Telephony for emergency purposes only.

Nevertheless there are other important issues related to the use of satellite telephones that need consideration. Because these satellites beam the signals directly to the telephones, they avoid the local wired and cellular networks. As a consequence, companies granted licences to provide local and International calls in that country will not be getting any revenue from these calls. As we do not have any registered Satellite Network Providers in this country, using a satellite telephone amounts to a bypassing of the local licensed Service Providers networks, which in Barbados, is illegal. A position paper on Bypass is presently under preparation.

As a result the Ministry Responsible for Telecommunications decrees that Satellite telephones should only be permitted and used in Barbados in the event of a national emergency where all

other telephone communications are out of action or severely restricted, and by long line fishing vessels to locate deep sea catches.

### 3 Regulations

It is proposed that any individual or organisation including Government Departments, desirous of using a satellite telephone in Barbados for any purpose must first apply to the Ministry Responsible for Telecommunications. Successful applicants will then be granted permission to bring the telephone into the country. Accordingly the telephone will be then be registered as a telecommunications device that should only be used in times of a national emergency, such as in the event of a hurricane, or other major disaster where all other means of telephone communications are severely limited, or for the location of deep sea catches by long line fishing. It is stipulated that when these phones are allowed for use in locating fish stocks targeted by long line fishing vessels, these phones are to be used for no other purposes, and applicants must provide proof to the Telecommunications Unit that he/she is the registered owner of a fishing vessel with a valid fishing licence. In cases of national emergency satellite phones can be used when staff are visiting remote locations outside Barbados to contact their home office. It is the responsibility of the user of a Satellite Telephone to inform the Telecommunications Unit of the spectrum to be used, so that the Barbados Frequency Allocation Tables can be updated, after a check has been carried out to verify that the proposed spectrum complies with the Barbados National Spectrum Plan.

*Prepared by the Ministry Responsible for Telecommunications*

*May 11, 2006*