



Iridium® Satellite, ProtectingAmerica.org and the American Red Cross Partner to Educate First Responders on Importance of Testing Satellite Phones

Iridium® Satellite, ProtectingAmerica.org and the American Red Cross Partner to Educate First Responders on Importance of Testing Satellite Phones. BETHESDA, Md., April 17 /PRNewswire/ -- Iridium® Satellite is pleased to announce its partnership with ProtectingAmerica.org and the American Red Cross to promote the second annual "Test Your Satellite Phone" Week kicking off May 25, 2008. The goal of "Test Your Satellite Phone" Week is to increase satellite phone user knowledge and help users confirm their access to the critical communication services satellite phones provide before they're needed in an emergency. ProtectingAmerica.org is a non-profit organization consisting of emergency management officials, first responders, disaster relief experts, insurers and others. Its mission is to establish a comprehensive, integrated national catastrophe management solution that will better prepare America. The American Red Cross helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.

"ProtectingAmerica.org is pleased to participate in this important initiative and commends Iridium Satellite for ensuring that our emergency workers are prepared to make that critical call during a disaster," said James Lee Witt, ProtectingAmerica.com national co-chair and former director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). "Too often, emergency workers turn on their satellite phone for the first time after disaster strikes to find they do not know how to use it properly, the batteries are not charged, their service is substandard or the phone won't connect."

"We've seen first-hand what happens when cities and towns are cut off from all communication during a disaster," said Joseph Becker, executive vice president, response and recovery, American Red Cross. "Taking precautions like testing your satellite phone can help save lives and property and we're happy to support this initiative by encouraging the first responders around the country to take heed."

Similar to the popular bi-annual testing of smoke alarms, "Test Your Satellite Phone" Week is intended to ensure that first responders know how to use their satellite phones and that they are, in fact, ready for use. Iridium, the American Red Cross and ProtectingAmerica.org hope to raise awareness of what first responders and commanders can do to be better prepared prior to disasters.

"Routine testing of emergency equipment, including satellite phones is critical to any emergency preparedness planning," said Iridium board member Tom Ridge, the first U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security and a two-term governor of Pennsylvania. "No phone is going to be effective unless users know how to operate it and the batteries are charged."

"Satellite phones have increasingly become the primary or backup communications tools during a disaster when cellular infrastructure and radio towers are down," said Matt Desch, chairman and CEO, Iridium Satellite. "Iridium is happy to have the assistance of ProtectingAmerica.org and the American Red Cross in spreading this important message to the first responder community."

The "Test Your Satellite Phone" Week initiative launched last year as a public service campaign to educate all satellite phone users about the importance of knowing how to use their phone and knowing that the phone is ready to connect when used. This has become increasingly more important as other mobile satellite phone providers have seen a drop in reliability and connection rates. Independent testing has verified that Iridium's first-time connection rate is better than 99 percent.

The "Test Your Satellite Phone" Week campaign asks all satellite phone owners to call a special number -- 00-1-480-752-5105 -- to test their satellite phones. Callers will hear a recorded message confirming that their call was completed and offering quick tips on proper handset usage. Iridium customers are not charged for air time on their satellite phone when calling this number; other satellite phone services may charge usage fees if they are not participating in the service. If customers find that their phones are not operational through this process, they should call their service provider for trouble-shooting.

Additional information on "Test Your Satellite Phone" Week may be found at <http://www.testyoursatellitephone.com/>. Tips and techniques available for satellite phone use and testing are included, such as:

- Test your phone on a monthly basis.
- Keep your phone's battery charged to ensure that it is ready for use when needed

- when needed.
- For maximum battery performance, allow the battery to power down completely before fully re-charging.
 - Check to make sure that the phone's SIM card is locked in place. Users can check this by removing the battery and ensuring that the SIM card tray is securely positioned.
 - Use the phone outside with a clear view of the sky and the horizon.
 - Turn the phone on and ensure that the antenna is extended and rotated upward.
 - To test your satellite phone, call 00-1-480-752-5105. The dialing sequence is very similar to dialing an international phone call. Dial 00, then country code, and then the phone number, or press the 0 key until a "+" appears, dial the country code, and then the phone number.
 - To hang up a call, press the red 'C' button.

About Iridium Satellite

Iridium Satellite LLC (<http://www.iridium.com/>) is the only mobile satellite service (MSS) offering gap-free, pole-to-pole coverage over the entire globe. Iridium's constellation of 66 low-earth orbiting (LEO), cross-linked satellites (and multiple in-orbit spares) provides critical voice and data services for regions not served by other communication networks. Driven by increasing demand for reliable, secure, global, mobile satellite links, Iridium has been steadily growing at a double-digit annual rate since 2004. Iridium serves commercial markets through a worldwide network of more than 150 partners, and also provides services to the U.S. Department of Defense, and other U.S. and international government agencies. The company's customers represent a broad spectrum of industry, including maritime, aeronautical, government/defense, public safety, utilities, oil/gas, mining, forestry, heavy equipment and transportation. Iridium has launched a major development program for its next-generation satellite constellation, called "NEXT," through which it will enable satellite-based innovations beyond communications. The company is headquartered in Bethesda, Md. and is privately held.

About American Red Cross

The American Red Cross helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Last year, almost a million volunteers and 35,000 employees helped victims of almost 75,000 disasters; taught lifesaving skills to millions; and helped U.S. service members separated from their families stay connected. Almost 4 million people gave blood through the Red Cross, the largest supplier of blood and blood products in the U.S. The American Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money and blood to do its work.

About ProtectingAmerica.org

ProtectingAmerica.org was formed in 2005 and is a non-profit organization consisting of emergency management officials, first responders, disaster relief experts, insurers and others. Its members include the American Red Cross, more than 300 other organizations and businesses and more than 15,000 individuals from across the nation.

At the core of ProtectingAmerica.org's mission is the establishment of a comprehensive, integrated national catastrophe management solution that will better prepare and protect American families, communities, consumers and the American economy from catastrophe. Among its efforts to support this mission, ProtectingAmerica.org is working to increase public awareness and consumer education; advocate for better coordination with local, state and federal mitigation and recovery efforts, and strengthen emergency response and financial mechanisms to rebuild after a major catastrophe.

In addition to its education and public awareness programs, the organization is supporting federal legislation that would establish a privately financed national catastrophe fund to serve as a backstop to state catastrophe funds. The funds' private deposits and the majority of the earnings could only be used to cover replacement and rebuilding costs following major catastrophic events. A portion of the earnings could be used to increase public and consumer education, strengthen first responders, enhance building codes and improve their enforcement.

SOURCE: Iridium Satellite

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