



The Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network Report to Spectrum Forum September 2008

There is little to report to the meeting other than comments, made by the Team Leader of the Network's Technical Team, on the various IARU Region 1 Conference papers.

CT08_C3_40 – We agree with Seppo's assessment. The 'competition' aspect was sprung as part of the last conference without recourse to the Emergency Comms Co-ordinator as to the applicability of the request. The status of Emergency Communications groups within the Region is variable along with their response to routine communications. A 'competition' is not viable at this time (and what would actually be achieved by such a competition remains in doubt).

CT08_C3_41 - The use of /D remains part of the GAREC recommendations though the availability of the suffix through licence conditions is inconsistent across the regions and there are some technical barriers for its use on data modes such as ALE. Whether it would actually be useful in an emergency is also not proven.

Support for this paper is really a strategic decision for the RSGB. The status of /D is not clear under our current licensing regime in the UK since it is not one of the recommended modifiers that the licensee may use. The way the paper is phrased though does not require societies to campaign for the use, it will not harm to support the proposal but may cause educational difficulties here....

CT08_C3_43 - This is a grand, and workable plan for IARU to make the most of emergency communications and get sponsorship in the same way as ARRL have obtained donations for their 'HamAid' programme for disaster relief. It should be supported given the other C3 papers regarding budget cuts and reduced income from National Societies as a way of making good budget shortfalls.

CT08_C4_09 - Contest Free Segments.

The GAREC conference held in Friedrichshafen this year made the following request in this regard;

"4. to include where possible into their contest rules the recommendation, that a frequency range of 5 kHz above and below the Centre of Activity frequencies adopted by the conferences in the three ITU (IARU) Regions should be kept free of contest traffic;"

Unfortunately on 80, 40 and to a point 20m the Contest preferred segments also include Emergency Centre of Activity(CoA) frequencies.

CT08_C4_14 - NRRL's proposals to harmonise band plans across regions.

Specifically with respect to point 4 and the use of 3760kHz as an Emergency CoA, the use of this frequency by UK stations has been sporadic since there is a UK emergency use frequency already established at 3663. When 3760 has been used for exercise purposes , such as in Global Simulated Emergency Tests, participating UK stations have always been advised to steer clear of 3760 to avoid conflict with WAB operations on that frequency at weekends.

Unfortunately as propagation changes through the day and coverage overlaps between stations from mainland Europe who are not subject to the same advice and UK stations, some friction has occurred. (During the last GlobalSET in May, 3760 was effectively rendered useless due to UK (not-WAB I hasten to add) and DL stations engaging in a battle of the linears to maintain 'their' frequency.

Unless anyone else knows of any other net claiming use of 3750kHz it feels like this change would be welcomed by WAB and Emergency Comms operators as at least reducing some of the problems.

40m Band planning in general

The RSGB provided additional 'local' frequencies for emergency use on 80/40m (3.663, 7045 & 7090) in the UK band plan to accommodate UK requirements. The 7045 frequency is effectively removed by the implementation of whichever 40m plan is chosen and 7090 has always clashed with QRP SSB as a

defined frequency. A replacement frequency which pleases more of the people some of the time would obviously be appreciated.

The UK paper **CT_08_19** also has one possible omission or area where conflict may occur. The majority of the SSB preferred segment from 7080 to 7200 is set as 'contest preferred'. This only leaves 7063 to 7080 for local 'ragchews' and Special event stations. The foot note that 7175 to 7200 is only to be used if there is an international nature to the contest doesn't really offer much succour to the local operator since this is turned into the new 'DX Window' for regular operators anyway.

The non-contest/DX space on 7MHz seems rather small so is there any chance/desire for this to be increased?

Data Modes:

The Global Simulated Emergency Tests started with SSB operations and in the last event expanded to include datamodes with CW due to complete the mode set in the November exercise. CW is ironically proving the easiest to implement since the mode can be used anywhere in any band, pretty much anywhere on the planet. Data modes have proved harder since some countries have mandatory band plans which appear to restrict data modes whereas the UK allows (in theory) data modes of any description to operate on the existing CoA. The latter is useful since a few data programs, such as NBEMS, may be seen as advocating mode agility as well as frequency agility in order to get messages through.

There are two schools of thought to resolve this problem.

One is that further Data Modes Emergency CoA frequencies are set up but would this involve one per bandwidth increment (i.e. one in the 500 Hz range & one in the 2700Hz range) and in addition to the Voice CoA. This might be considered rather greedy.

The other is that we have better clarity about which countries would permit data modes on or near the existing CoA, that makes it our problem to make best use of the area as conditions change where regulations permit.

There is some difficulty in gathering all the information for IARU Region 1 at the moment but does a band-planning group have full information on what is permitted by each regulator within Region 1 and could this information be provided so we can see the problems and drivers for some of the band - planning issues faced at these conferences ?

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