



MOUNTAIN RESCUE (ENGLAND & WALES)

PATRON · HRH PRINCE WILLIAM OF WALES

Address for this correspondence:

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17th October 2008

For the attention of Michael Richardson

Dear Mr Richardson,

With regards to the current OFCOM Consultation document relating to "*Applying spectrum pricing to the Maritime and Aeronautical sectors*", **Mountain Rescue (England & Wales)** wish to make the following representation on behalf of its membership.

MR(E&W) celebrated its 75th Anniversary this year. Over those 75 years, communication methods have changed alongside the technology of the day, but never to a point which may compromise the safety of the casualty or the team members undertaking a rescue. The member teams are manned by volunteers, and fund raise as Charities to cover their running costs.

In harmonisation with the DfT UKSAR, MR(E&W) teams have moved to the allocate channels in the past 3 years, ensuring that in the event of a major incident, a fully integrated organisation of search and rescue co-ordinators and operational units could utilise a comprehensive communications infrastructure providing a well-developed search and rescue model.

With this vision in mind, teams, as funds have permitted, have either replaced or updated their communication equipment to ensure that a common standard and operating procedure could be established to achieve this goal. Communication between air Search and Rescue assets, both military and civilian, are for once undertaken with ease with the common "band plan" in place between all organisations.

This has proved its worth in a number of major incidents, including the Morcamble Bay Cocklers, Greyrigg Rail Crash, and the flooding incidents we experienced in Carlise and subsequently throughout the UK during 2007. In most of these incidents, the communications provided by Mountain Rescue teams has been of paramount importance, with the failure of mobile phone and Airwave systems occurring in the majority of these.

The application of commercial pricing to Mountain Rescue will have an extreme affect on its member teams, with the possibility of each team being required to purchase a licence for the channels currently used by UKSAR, and its associated financial impact. Moving to more limited channels may affect the operational ability of the teams, and hence their life saving ability.

With the facts presented, and the feelings of the membership that have been voiced, MR(E&W) would urge OFCOM to consider the current position of the organisations involved in UK Search and Rescue within its Consultative period leading to the derivation of any changes in spectrum pricing to the channels currently used.

It is our opinion that any cost impact on teams would only lead to funds being diverted from more essential equipment used in the preservation of life by the teams, and a change of channel allocation would remove the harmonisation the UKSAR member organisations have strived to achieve over the past years. MR(E&W) are strongly opposed to any such changes due to the impact it would have on its primary aim, that being saving lives in the wild and remote areas of England and Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Allan'.

David Allan FRCS
Chairman MR(E&W)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Bell'.

Peter Bell
President MR(E&W)