

## **SafetyNet's SATCOLT keeps channels open for first responders: TELUS system eases disaster-relief work**

The Vancouver Province

Fri 07 Jul 2006

Page: A36 / Front

Section: Money

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Source: The Province

**TELUS** has found a way to end the nightmare of disrupted communications among emergency responders during a disaster.

The company yesterday introduced its SATCOLT system, which can be flown or driven into a disaster zone and quickly set up to provide radio and cellular phone service for up to 1,000 users.

SATCOLT (for satellite cellsite on light truck) produces a large cellsite linked to the North America-wide wireless network by satellite.

It's the latest addition to **TELUS**'s SafetyNet program.

"This provides you with the ability to come in and have high-volume, high-capacity communications with voice or data anywhere you need them," said Colin Belshaw, director of corporate development for **TELUS** Mobility.

"The truck can act as a stand-alone radio system or as a gateway through which all of the other products operate."

SATCOLT is built on a 10-tonne truck and powered by diesel generators that can keep it running for at least seven days.

The unit is worth \$1 million but leases to customers for "less than \$10,000 a day," said Belshaw.

The third-generation technology is satellite-based -- so will function almost anywhere -- and can bring together incompatible communications systems.

In many communities, including some in Greater Vancouver, police and fire departments talk on different radio systems.

"This is a huge step forward for first responders," said Gord Tomlinson, superintendent of the North Vancouver RCMP detachment.

"My experience in dealing with disasters is that usually the biggest problem is communications."

As well, the handsets are equipped with GPS (global positioning system), so the location of responders using them can be tracked in dangerous circumstances often encountered in natural disasters.

Currently, there are just seven such units in the world.

**TELUS** is deploying another in Ontario, while another five are in the U.S. under contract to military and law-enforcement agencies.

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Illustration:

• Colour Photo: Les Bazso, The Province / North Vancouver RCMP Supt. Gord Tomlinson tries out the SATCOLT system with **TELUS**'s Colin Belshaw (left) and Ken Green.