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Worst Floods in 50 Years Lead to Greater Demand for Satellite Phones

(25 July 2007) International satellite communications provider NSSL is reporting an upsurge in demand for handheld satellite phones since major flooding hit large parts of the UK.

The emergency services and media have led the increase in enquiries as traditional cellular networks have struggled to cope with traffic demand and the threat of flooding at base stations. The power supplies of 500,000 homes are under threat and 10,000 homes have already been flooded. With power stations down, phone sockets blown, and mobile phone masts out of action the need for communication equipment independent of local infrastructure has become even greater.



Danielle Edwards, Product Marketing Manager at NSSL said: "Floods can have a catastrophic effect on the communication systems we all rely on, even in advanced countries like the UK. GSM phone masts get destroyed in the storms and electricity cuts prevent mainline telephone lines from working. Only satellite phones provide a reliable alternative, saving lives and helping families keep in contact."

Demand has been particularly strong from the emergency services as they need unhindered access to geographically marginalised villages and towns throughout the UK, many of which do not even have mobile phone coverage. NSSL has also experienced increased demand from corporate executives who need to keep in touch with the office. The most popular models have been the Iridium and Thuraya handheld phones, with Inmarsat set to launch their handheld service later this year.