



## Tachyon Networks Provides Emergency Voice/Data for SDG&E During San Diego Wildfires

**TRANSPORTABLE SOLUTIONS  
THAT MEET YOUR URGENT  
COMMUNICATION NEEDS**



### **BACKGROUND AND CHALLENGE**

The October 2007 California Wildfires began burning across Southern California on October 20. At least 1,500 homes were destroyed and over 500,000 acres of land burned from Santa Barbara County to the U.S.–Mexico border. Nine people died as a direct result of the fires; 85 others were injured, including at least 61 firefighters. The raging fires were so intense that they were visible from space.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency in seven California counties where fires were burning. President George W. Bush concurred, and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local response efforts. Over 6,000 firefighters worked to fight the blazes; they were aided by units of the United States Armed Forces, United States National Guard, almost 3,000 prisoners convicted of non-violent crimes and 60 firefighters from the Mexican cities of Tijuana and Tecate. The fires forced approximately 1,000,000 people to evacuate their homes, the largest evacuation in California's history.

Major contributing factors to the extreme fire conditions were drought in Southern California, hot weather, and the strong Santa Ana winds, with gusts reaching 85 mph. California's "fire season," which traditionally runs from June to October, has become a year-round threat due to a mixture of perennial drought and the increasing number of homes built in canyons and on hillsides surrounded by brush and forest.

Of all the fires, the biggest were located in San Diego County. Two days into the fires, approximately 500,000 people from at least 346,000 homes were under mandatory orders to evacuate, the largest evacuation in the region's history. Evacuation sites managed by the American Red Cross included Qualcomm Stadium, as well as many schools, civic centers and churches throughout the area. Officials estimated that 12,000 evacuees gathered at Qualcomm. Nearly all public schools and universities in the

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San Diego area were closed. Many businesses closed as well. To ensure clear roads for emergency vehicles, San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders asked residents to stay home and inside.

Voice and data communications are crucial in a disaster. Government and businesses cannot afford downtime and must maintain productivity and services without interruption. San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) faced a monumental challenge in responding to this emergency situation. Rural areas became inaccessible and isolated due to the loss of vital infrastructure. The wildfires left over 35 miles of electrical wires burned, along with 1,800 utility poles. SDG&E needed a quick deploy communications solution that would enable employees and emergency personnel to communicate and respond effectively and efficiently.

## **THE SOLUTION AND RESULTS**

During the devastating wildfires, SDG&E activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in which all key representatives from the company came together to monitor events, communicate and make decisions. Therefore getting current, real-time information in the right form and context was of critical importance to the company.

Tachyon quickly performed an assessment of SDG&E's emergency communication needs. Tachyon has a long history of working with government, commercial, and relief agencies and has extensive experience developing emergency communications plans. It was determined that Tachyon's San Diego headquarters was too dangerous to occupy, as nearby fires continued to rage. Therefore Tachyon recommended its satellite IP service from a safe mirrored facility on the East Coast and a communications solution that included network connectivity, on-site installation and support, and VoIP phones and services.

Tachyon responded immediately and was on site with equipment within 14 hours. Service was subsequently deployed in three mobile command center locations, which enabled SDG&E to establish critical communications with field personnel in a life-threatening environment.

Tachyon's terrestrial independent, transportable communication solutions are designed to perform under the worst disaster conditions. We make it easy to rapidly construct communication networks, including those for first-response emergency connectivity. After this successful engagement Tachyon and SDG&E collaborated on the development of both a business continuity and disaster recovery plan. SDG&E is confident that these communication plans will increase its preparedness for future potential disasters.

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## **ABOUT TACHYON NETWORKS**

Tachyon Networks has operated more high-end enterprise applications, with more reliability, to more Fortune 500 companies, for longer than any other satellite & wireless operator. As an end-to-end communications solutions provider, we deliver the highest quality satellite service in the industry. Specializing in the Enterprise, Industrial and Government markets, Tachyon is the expert in customized satellite networking solutions for diverse & complex customer environments and applications. Our solutions are financially backed with Service Level Agreements that guarantee the highest levels of networking performance and availability (99.9%). Tachyon is the premier satellite solution for all your complex networking requirements.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT**

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