

Periodic communication outages due to Sun

Anchorage — Twice yearly, the sun, the earth and the communications satellite handling much of Alaska's long distance telephone communications align along a straight path. During these times each of Alascom's more than 200 satellite earth stations are unavoidably pointed at the sun which is positioned directly behind the orbiting satellite. Radio interference from the sun creates conditions unfavorable to satellite communications during these brief periods.

The time and duration of these "sun outages" vary from site to site across Alaska, although the period during which any site is subject to a sun outage is predictable. The last period of sun outages occurred from October 12 through October 16.

With Alascom's high-technology communications

equipment, sun outages are becoming less prevalent each year, though some remote small earth stations may have been subject to a once-daily, one-to-five minute outage shortly after 1 p.m. during the preceding five-day period. Transmissions may fade during these periods and may be lost completely during the peak of the sun outage. Lines of communication can be re-established with the passing of the sun outage. Terrestrial communication links, including microwave, and interstate calling are unaffected by the phenomena.

Any caller disconnected during any outage period should immediately contact a long distance operator for instant credit on their call.

