Helicopter Satellite Communication (SATCOM): Development of Low-Cost Real-Time Voice and Data System for Aeronautical Mobile Satellite Service (AMSS)*

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January 1993

Abstract

Current helicopter communications are handled by V111 radio which is limited in coverage and operational range. There is a real need for helicopter SATCOM system to extend the coverage while meeting the unique conditions imposed by the helicopter operational environment. Existing fixed wing aircraft SATCOM systems have been considered but do not support helicopter specific requirements, including low cost, size, and weight. Furthermore, the helicopter's wide angle rapid flight maneuvers impose various restrictions on the antenna requirements for continuous coverage. In this paper, various diversity techniques have been investigated for optimum real-time voice and data processing. Coding, modulation, and interleaving are all employed to mitigate periodic signal blockage, due to the main rotor blades, and high Doppler frequency shifts. Also, potential low-cost omni-directional antenna designs and locations on the helicopter are presented.

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* This work was carried out by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA, and was sponsored by the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) through an agreement with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.