LAO PDR NATIONAL UXO/MINE ACTION STANDARDS (NS)

Chapter Seventeen

Communications

**National Regulatory Authority for
the UXO/Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR**

15 October 2012

Contents

Amendment Record

Management of Lao PDR National UXO/Mine Action Standards(NS) Amendments

The Lao PDR NS series is subject to formal review on a three-yearly basis; however this does not preclude amendments being made within these three-year periods for reasons of operational safety and efficiency or for editorial purposes. As amendments are made to this NS they will be given a number, and the date and general details of the amendment shown in the table below.

As formal reviews of each NS are completed new editions may be issued. Amendments up to the date of the new edition will be incorporated into the new edition and the amendment record table cleared. Recording of amendments will then start again until a further review is carried out.

Number	Date	Amendment Details

Communications

1. Introduction

Effective communication systems are essential for the efficient and safe management of UXO/mine action operations. Without them, command and control of operations is difficult, routine coordination and liaison does not occur as it should, and most importantly, the critical coordination and support essential to an emergency plan is affected.

The Lao PDR National Regulatory Authority (NRA) is the authority responsible for the control and regulation of UXO/mine action in Lao PDR. This responsibility includes establishing the minimum requirements for communications in support of UXO/mine action in Lao PDR and ensuring compliance with these requirements.

2. Scope

This chapter covers the minimum requirements for communications in support of UXO/mine action within Lao PDR.

3. Operational Communication Requirements

All clearance organisations are to have a radio or telephone communication link with a supporting base/HQ established and functioning, on clearance worksites, before any clearance operations commence. The communication link should be checked on a daily basis. If for any reason a radio or telephone communication link is unavailable then clearance operations are not to take place.

All clearance worksites are to have an internal radio communication network that includes as a minimum the clearance supervisor and the medic. Other working supervisory personnel and the ambulance/safety vehicle driver are also to have radios; however this requirement only applies when they are working or positioned beyond voice contact distance of other personnel on the site.

In situations where 2 worksites are supported by one medic (within 5 minutes travel time of each other) a radio communication link between the 2 worksites is to be established before any clearance work takes place. This communication link is to be checked every hour. If communications between the 2 worksites is lost, work on the worksite without a medic is to cease until communications are re-established.

When UXO disposal operations are being carried out, communications are to be established and maintained between the supervisor and all sentries throughout the duration of the task. Ideally, this should be radio communications; however other methods of communications may be used provided the requirement for communications between the supervisor and sentries is able to be complied with.

Clearance technicians are not to have handheld radios or mobile telephones with them while they are physically conducting clearance operations.

Where operational communication systems require the use of frequencies, channels or telephone numbers, these details are to be held personally by clearance supervisors and where applicable, also included with clearance worksite documentation.

Supporting bases or HQ responsible for providing external support to clearance operations are to ensure that communication systems are always staffed during the hours and days when the field teams are working, including travel to and from bases and headquarters, to provide external support in an emergency.

The following general communication requirements should be followed by organisations undertaking UXO clearance operations:

a. Communications are to be checked before leaving the base at the start of the day.

b. On completion of all UXO clearance operations for the day, teams are to advise their supporting base or HQ that work is finished and that they are returning to base.

c. Teams are to advise their supporting base or HQ when they have reached base and are about to close down.

3.1. Mechanical Operations

At all times when a crewed machine is working on mechanical operations, the machine operator is to have radio communications with the clearance supervisor.

4. Accident Reporting Procedures

Accident reporting procedures are covered in **Chapter 23 of NS, Reporting and Investigation of UXO/Mine Action Incidents**.

5. Net Control Stations (NCS)

Clearance organisations establishing communication networks in support of clearance operations are to designate the senior station on each network as the NCS. Clearance organisations are to ensure that NCS are staffed at all times while other stations are on the net. NCS are responsible for

a. Allocating call signs to net stations.

b. Maintaining radio net discipline such as use of voice procedure and call signs.

c. Ensuring that net stations comply with communication procedures.

d. Monitoring radio checks.

e. Coordinating emergency support requirements in the event of an accident.

6. VHF Radio Call-Signs

Clearance organisations and individual clearance supervisors are to ensure that an appropriate and workable call sign system is established for networks under their control to ensure that there is no confusion between radio users as to who they are communicating with. Such a call sign system should be able to function when 2 worksites are adjacent each other and there is an overlap of VHF coverage.

7. Radio Telephone Procedures (RTP)

All radio users are to use basic RTP to include the following:

a. Before commencing a voice transmission, operators are to listen in to the channel to ensure it is not in use.

b. Voice transmissions are to be kept brief and concise.

c. Radio call signs are to be used at all times.

d.   When operators have finished talking they are to say over or a similar word in the Lao language.

e.   When an entire radio conversation is finished, the station that initiated the conversation is to say out or a similar word in the Lao language.

f.   The word roger or a similar word in the Lao language is to be used to signify understanding or agreement.

8.   Operational Communication Training

All radio users employed on clearance operations are to receive training in the use and maintenance of the communication systems they are to use. This training is to include:

a.   The basic principles of how the communication systems work.

b.   Operation and user-level maintenance of the communication systems to be used.

c.   RTP.

d.   Operational communication requirements.

e.   Accident reporting procedures.

Clearance organisations are responsible for ensuring that this training is conducted for their staff and for maintaining records of this training.

9.   Demining Organisations SOPs

Where applicable, the minimum communication procedures to be included in clearance organisations SOPs are:

a.   Operational communication requirements.

b.   Accident reporting procedures.

c.   Designation of, and responsibilities of Net Control Stations (NCS).

d.   Requirements in relation to VHF radio call-signs.

e.   The requirement to use RTP and guidelines for its use.

f.   Operational communication training requirements.