



WILLIAM T. PECORA AWARD

International Charter on Space and Major Disasters

For outstanding support to the global community during times of crisis

The International Charter on Space and Major Disasters (Charter) supplies “during periods of crisis, to States or communities whose population, activities or property are exposed to an imminent risk, or are already victims of natural or technological disasters, satellite data which provide critical information for the management of crises.” From the first Charter activation in 2000 to ongoing activations in 2017, the Charter has provided satellite imagery free of charge for disaster response purposes throughout the world.

Satellite imagery and information disseminated from the Charter supported response efforts to the massive 7.9 magnitude earthquake in Nepal in 2015; Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013; the earthquake in Haiti in 2010; the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010; the tsunami in Indonesia and Thailand in 2004; and more than 500 other disasters spanning the globe. In each situation, the Charter responded with satellite remote sensing data, information, and expertise, in a reliable and responsive way to help mitigate the impact on human lives and livelihoods from floods, earthquakes, fires, oil spills, hurricanes & typhoons, and more. The Charter has a system that springs into action in the earliest hours following a disaster, through cooperation and collaboration across space agencies and participating organizations, to provide the right data and information to the right set of users and responders at the right time.

The founding of the Charter in November 2000 and its subsequent growth and operations have changed the way civil protection agencies respond to disasters, greatly increasing their use of satellite earth observations to save lives and protect property. With the satellite imagery provided by the Charter, decisionmakers, rescue teams, and responders can assess the extent and areas of damage before putting response teams at risk. That imagery allows them to quickly determine best available ingress routes to rescue victims, move them to safety, and select the best marshalling locations for rescue efforts.

Through its network of authorized users, the Charter provides a unified system of remote sensing satellite data acquisition and delivery to those affected by sudden onset natural or anthropogenic disasters. Each of the 16 Charter member agencies commits satellite, data processing, and data distribution assets to provide emergency managers with information they need to support response and near-term recovery efforts. The wide range of satellites operated by Charter members can ensure rapid coverage and re-visit anywhere on the Earth, providing an invaluable source of near- real-time information to responders.

The humanitarian mission, design, and implementation of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters make it highly deserving of the William T. Pecora Team Award.

Secretary
Department of the Interior

Acting Administrator
National Aeronautics and
Space Administration