

A FEW EXAMPLES OF THE RUGGEDNESS OF OUR EQUIPMENT

We have such a collection of Weatherpak "it takes a licking - but keeps on ticking" stories that we felt we finally had to share them. A Weatherpak in case you've been out of the country for the last few years is our very compact reliable sophisticated weather station. It measures 4 x 21 inches, weighs less than 12 pounds and is completely self contained - i.e. no other boxes of electronics etc. Anyway here are a few of the stories.

Location: Oilrig off the coast of Nova Scotia

In case you are not familiar with the weather there, when we serviced one of their Weatherpaks once we had to call them up and ask them if the data still in memory was real or not. AVERAGE winds of 40 -50 MPH and temperatures below 0 were the norm. After a particularly big storm (I hate to think of what a "really big storm" is if the average is 40 -50 MPH) it was noticed that the mast holding the Weatherpak (of customer manufacture) had simply snapped off and blown into the sea. A replacement Weatherpak was ordered, built, and sent.

The weather was so nasty that no one had climbed up to inspect the damaged area until the new Weatherpak arrived. The original Weatherpak was found where it had crashed to the catwalk. It was found to operate perfectly, however a new wind monitor was required.

Location: Uninhabited island somewhere off the coast of Alaska

A radio transmitting Weatherpak was mounted on an 80-foot tower that contained a large microwave antenna. After about two years of flawless operation the wind speed went to zero and stayed that way. It was first noticed after a big storm (70 - 80 MPH winds so it was assumed some mechanical failure was responsible) so a ship was sent out about a month later. Upon arriving they found that the entire tower had blown over and smashed to the ground. This broke the wind monitor off of the Weatherpak but - it kept on transmitting (it had its own radio).

Location: Pre-trials America's Cup sail boat race

A Weatherpak was located on a large Coast Guard buoy that the sailboats also used as practice for a course buoy. One day the Weatherpak stopped transmitting and the customer went out to inspect the buoy. The Weatherpak had been literally ripped out of its mounting post (a threaded pipe torn out of a coupler). A few days later a racing team showed up with the Weatherpak (after they found out whose it was) with the following story: We like to cut as close as possible to the buoy to keep our times down low. When we cut around the buoy the sail swung back and ripped the Weatherpak off the buoy throwing it up into the air. It landed on one of our crew breaking his collarbone, then crashing to the deck - Sorry. The Weatherpak when plugged back into power worked fine.

Location: Fire Department vehicle manufacturer

A version of the Weatherpak is frequently used by hazardous materials response teams around the world. One version uses a radio and another version mounts directly to the vehicle. One manufacturer wished to mount the Weatherpak to a 25-foot telescoping mast. The mast was 2 inches in diameter and the Weatherpak mounting 1.5 inches in diameter, so for a trial run they just set the Weatherpak mount inside the mast and began to raise it. The first 18 feet was smooth and uneventful. However, as the last section of tower began to rise it was liftoff time. The last 7 feet shot up and the Weatherpak was launched into the air as everyone watched with only the look one can have when knowingly doing something that they really shouldn't have. Needless to say, it smashed to the concrete. When plugged in it worked fine.

Location: Navy research vessel

A customer sent in a version of the Weatherpak that is used for ships complaining that it wasn't working properly. Upon arrival the service manager had to scratch his head - it looked like the Weatherpak had been beaten with a lead pipe about 100 times. It did need some work to get it running properly again and the wind monitor was gone. The customer finally admitted that the mast holding the Weatherpak at the bow of the ship had snapped off in a large storm. The Weatherpak was assumed lost. However, a week later, a sailor noticed a cable hanging over the side of the ship and pulled it up to find a Weatherpak attached to the other end - it had been banging against the side of the ship for the entire week (not to mention the storm).

Location: Industrial monitoring site, midwest

A customer called to ask if there was a restart timer or something that we could install in his Weatherpak because it kept shutting off and his employee had to keep restarting it. Upon further questioning the customer said "Well it keeps getting hit by lightning and that seems to shut it off". I confess we cannot substantiate this statement and we hope he meant lightning was hitting things nearby. The Weatherpak is uniquely grounded at a single point to discourage large EM fluxes, however we make no claim that it will survive as a lightning rod. We provided him with a lightning rod, and installed a watchdog timer in the Weatherpak. This solved the problem.

If you have any of your own stories we would love to hear them, and of course if you want further information on this amazing product - give us a call.