



Outdoors-Magazine.com

<http://outdoors-magazine.com>

Emergency dynamo/sun powered radio

Tjin

- Gear reviews and tests - Emergency and survival -



Publication: Tuesday 21 March 2006

Description :

a review of a dynamo/sun powered radio.

Copyright (c) Outdoors-Magazine.com under a Creative Commons

Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike License

Dynamo/sun powered radio

Being able to receive information can be very important. Both when you just hiking or during an emergency. Knowing what weather is coming and having plenty of updates on it, keeps you out of trouble. In an emergency, information becomes even more important. During larger disasters it's good to know where government shelters are, what happened and what you should and shouldn't do.

In mine country and many others, emergency broadcast of emergency information is done by TV and FM radio. This makes it very important to have a TV or FM radio. A FM radio is much more practical due to the much smaller size and much lower power consumption. Unfortunately both of these devices take electricity to work. This is not always available. Batteries will work for a long period, but will eventually run out. Also batteries can leak and loose there energy during storage.



The radio

I first spotted this FM/AM radio in a shop when I was a little kid. It has a solar panel, a hand cranked dynamo, place for 2x AA batteries and a hole to attach a 3.5 volt adapter with. I can still remember thinking it was very "cool", but way out of budget too. So many years went by. Than it reappeared on my radar screen, having emergency preparedness as my hobby, this little radio became more than just "cool", but the shop I first spotted it, stopped selling them for years. But than when I was surfing on an advertising website, I spotted 2 for a good price! So I bought them. Manufacture is unknown to me.

I wasn't sure what to expect of them. When I was thinking of buying them I was wondering how well they would perform. I own a solar battery charger, which has yet to charge any battery to a capacity so any electric device would react to it. Also you hear that many of these things are more a gadget than an actually well functioning device. So I expected the worst...

Thankfully this radio turns out to work very well! The reception is very good. You can hear most of the mayor channels well with the antenna in storage mode. With the antenna pulled out, the reception becomes even better. Surprising, since the design is pretty old (on the market approximate in 1990). I expected a much worse reception, but it performed just as well as my digital world receiver on FM bands. The scale on the reception knob is a little bit weird.

The quality of the sound is pretty much what you can expect from a small single speaker radio. It's good on normal

Emergency dynamo/sun powered radio

volumes, but sounds horrible when you put it on max. Although I wouldn't know why I would want that.



The hand crank In deployed mode. It folds up and stores a little more compact.

The mode I use most frequently is the hand crank. 30 seconds of cranking gets you about 5 minutes of music. But it really depends on how hard you crank it. I'm pretty happy with this option, it works quite well. There is however a complaint; the noise! The crank is connected to various gears to power the little dynamo on much higher speed. But it also causes the radio to sound like a kitchen blender when cranking it.



The solar panel One of them has a crack on top.

I never really used the solar option. So I can't really say much about it. It's not really that sunny in my country and cranking it, is much quicker. Although it might have helped... I can't really tell.

There is another option to charge the internal battery, by using an adapter. There is a warning that this should not be done for more than 2 hours. So this battery charger is probably not "intelligent". I never used it because I don't actually own such an adapter.



battery compartment Also visible are the headphone and adapter inlets.

The battery also works well, really not much to say about. Just load 2 AA's and put the radio one. I only used it to test whether this function actually work. I don't use it nominally with this radio.

The body of this radio is made from hard plastic. And has a lanyard attached to it. Nothing really special, it's a bit square and lacking on the design section. But I don't really care. The size is a little larger than small world receivers. The weight isn't too bad either.

Conclusion: This radio brought me confidence in hand cranked devices. The retail price is approximate 25 dollars. It works well, but noisy when cranking it and the tuner isn't that precise. There is a version on the market with a light attached to it, since i don't own one of them i can't comment on how well that one works.

Any additions or corrections will be posted on the comment section below.