

Cellular Phones for Emergency Communications

CELL PHONES FOR EVERYDAY AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Cell phones provide unparalleled convenience for everyday operations and small emergencies, but will likely be unavailable during large emergencies.

Cell phones are basically two-way radios which convert your voice or text into an electrical signal that is transmitted to the nearest cell tower. Most also utilize available wifi networks and/or Bluetooth connections when available.

Cell Towers

Cell phones are highly dependent on cellular tower service associated with the user's cellular service provider. Metropolitan areas may be served by many towers from many services, but rural areas are especially vulnerable to lack of service, or service from just one or two providers.

In addition, cellular service can become overwhelmed when too many people use the service at one time. Text messages may still go through – or they may not.

Finally, loss of service from single or multiple cellular towers can have a sudden and huge impact on a particular community.

Apps

Most cell phones use data services to provide additional functionality through apps, including mapping, email, weather, camera, and myriad other useful tools. These services are also subject to interruption when cell towers are clogged or down, when users exceed data usage for their plan, or when employers lock phones such that only certain “approved” apps can be used on work cell phones.

For these reasons, programs are encouraged to develop backup plans for situations when cell phones are not available.

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