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## Cell Phone Apps vs. Radios

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***This is ONE guy's perspective that must be weighed against law, insurance, culture, etc.***

|               | Cell Phone Apps   | Radios  |
|---------------|---|---|
| Pros          | <p>Uses technology your team likely already owns and knows.</p> <p>Push-to-talk apps (Zello, Voxer, etc.) add GPS location sharing, text messaging, and photo/video capability.</p> <p>Low or no additional cost if team members have data plans or use internal wifi</p> <p>Easy to onboard new team members without additional hardware.</p>  | <p>Works without cellular coverage or Wi-Fi — reliable in buildings and dead zones.</p> <p>Instant push-to-talk: no login, no app, no competing notifications.</p> <p>Dedicated device means full battery available and full attention on security communications.</p> <p>Proven, familiar technology for security and emergency operations.</p> <p>During an emergency, significantly easier to communicate with.</p> <p>Minimal training.</p> |
| Cons          | <p>Dependent on cellular signal or Wi-Fi — both can fail during a large event or crisis.</p> <p>Shares battery life and attention with personal calls, social media, and notifications.</p> <p>App must be open and running — easy to miss a call when switching apps.</p> <p>Personal devices mean personal data and personal distractions are always present.</p> <p>“Looking” at a cell phone can be viewed as distracting, distracted.</p> <p>During an emergency, the pulling, looking, using cell phone could cause hands to not be available and extremely hard to manage</p> <p>Could require added training on use of app(s) and incident simulations.</p> | <p>Additional hardware cost (\$50–\$600+ per radio depending on quality and range needs).</p> <p>Requires a plan for charging, storage, and distribution before each event.</p> <p>FCC licensing may be required for certain frequencies.</p> <p>No text messaging, no location sharing, no photos — voice only.</p>  |
| Also Consider | <p>What happens to your communications if your cell carrier goes down during a major event?</p> <p>Have you tested app coverage throughout your entire facility, including stairwells and parking?</p> <p>Is your team disciplined enough to keep the app active without getting distracted? Be honest.</p>   | <p>Have you considered a hybrid approach — radios for core team, app for overflow volunteers?</p> <p>Repeaters can solve building coverage gaps for radios without switching technologies.</p> <p>Many organizations find radio for events and app for daily/weekday communication works well.</p>  |

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|  | Is the information on the cell phone discoverable? |  |
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