

It happened on 9/11, during Katrina, after the I-35 bridge collapse, and likely will happen again the next time disaster strikes: Frightened survivors attempt a call on their cell phones and can NOT get through.

Don't let this happen to you!

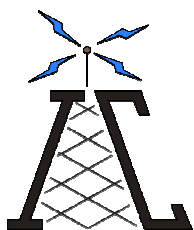
Relying on cellular phones as a primary method of first responder communications is an **unwise** decision.

The cellular networks are designed to withstand peak calling times during commute hours not to handle everyone in a disaster area being on the cell phone at the same time. Cellular phone communications are typically the first thing to break down or become overloaded in an emergency. Recent disasters prove this again and again.

- ***Tornado: Salt Lake City - August 11, 1999, Within 5 minutes cell phone circuits were overloaded and remained that way for the next 6 hours.***
- ***Terrorism: New York City - Sept 11, 2001, Cell phones systems were so jammed they were useless to emergency personnel***
- ***Hurricane: New Orleans - August 23, 2005, Cellular communications infrastructure destroyed***
- ***I-35 Bridge Collapse: Minneapolis – August 1, 2007, Officials said it was difficult to make a cell phone voice call immediately following the collapse of the I-35 bridge over the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. That often forced emergency responders to use radios and other communications devices.***
- ***Earthquake: San Francisco – October 31, 2007, the huge number of cell phone calls overwhelmed systems that weren't built to handle such high demand. Instead of reaching their destinations, the calls received fast busy signals or messages saying that all circuits were busy.***

"But we don't have enough people in Eastern Washington to overload the system," you say. Unfortunately, fewer people mean fewer cell phone lines. A typical rural cell tower may only have 20 to 30 phone lines – adequate to handle normal call volumes. However, "an event such as the Minneapolis bridge collapse can generate as much as 10 times more cellular traffic than normal levels." When a disaster occurs and the cellular call volume jumps by a factor of 10 to 200 calls in the rural area, the cellular network goes into overload quickly. Instead of calls going through, busy signals are heard. Don't expect cellular providers to design their systems to handle emergency call volumes. It is cost prohibitive for cellular carriers to install enough extra lines to handle the surge from rare events such as disasters or large scale emergencies.

Bottom line – Cellular networks are not designed to handle the huge call volume generated during emergencies and quickly become overwhelmed and inadequate for first responder communications.



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