

# Bringing radio communications to cell phones

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Last month, CEOs from a number of different radio and other communication companies met with the Federal Communication Commission to discuss the possibility of putting [FM radio receivers in cell phones](#). While this may seem like something that is an obvious technology for the future, this could add to the ways public safety communications officials and first responders handle emergencies.

While detailed specifics of these meetings are not fully known, radio executives apparently argued that FM radio transmitters on cell phones would enhance public safety as well as enable future updates of emergency warning systems through the use of radio and cell phone text messaging. The apparent cost of including such a 'chip' in cell phones would cost no more than \$1 per unit, a very minimal cost for even more possible benefit.

Radio manufactures and other communications companies need not fret. Despite the possibility of phones including radio transmitters, there has not been enough evidence to show that a public safety official could replace his handheld digital radio with a cell phone with radio. While this type of communications would not replace radio communications, it could be coupled with Emergency Notification systems and other tools. Being able to send a message from a police or 911 center to all public safety officials cellular phones would be a huge benefit should other channels be disrupted. The enhanced cell phone radio would merely bring redundancy and allow for additional channels to initiate emergency warnings beyond TV and other means.

As cities, counties and states reband their radio channels in accordance with FCC regulations, new technologies were bound to emerge and provide additional protection and security. Rebanding efforts should continue and public safety agency should remain steadfast in their use of handheld and mobile radio devices despite this new unapproved, technology. If these cell phone radios are approved and become viable, then vendors can begin to speak with localities about the technology and move toward even more interoperable and redundant communications.