



Frequently Asked Questions

Why are police and fire radios so large? There are multiple reasons for the larger size of these two-way radios compared to cell phones. First, public safety radios have more transmitting power, often 3 to 5 watts of power, compared to 250-300 milliwatts (about one-tenth as much) for a cell phone. This gives the public safety radios more range and better ability to broadcast out from inside buildings. But more power also requires a larger battery in the device. Next, a handful of public safety radio sites can typically cover a county. The City of Seattle, for example, is covered by about 10 public safety radio sites, compared to 80 or more cell sites. But this also requires the portable and mobile radios to transmit with more power to reach the more distant radio site. The larger radio also allows larger button and knobs, which accommodates public safety officers (e.g. firefighters) who may have to operate them with gloves.