

Command Posts inside the buildings made calls to them subject to attenuation. Nonetheless, there were reports by emergency responders that their radios played a part in saving their lives.

- Radio communications overload quickly became a problem. After the first aircraft strike, there was a factor-of-five increase in emergency responder radio communications. This resulted in situations where the base station radio operators were unable to relay important information. Approximately 1/3 to 1/2 of the emergency radio communications were not complete messages or were not understandable.
- Communications within, from, and to WTC 1 were problematic. The building emergency communications system used to make the emergency announcements inside was inoperable as a result of the aircraft impact. The warden and standpipe phone systems were also not operating. The radio repeater in WTC 5, though found to be operational, was not effective in WTC 1. Eventually, only about half of the responders located in WTC 1 heard radio messages calling for the immediate evacuation of the building. Emergency responders who had the evacuation information told others.
- The WTC 5 repeater appeared to be effective in WTC 2. The Battalion Car Cross-band Repeater, recently developed by the FDNY and taken to the lobby of WTC 2, was used as a backup.
- Information overload led to an inability to pool and analyze information in real time and to distribute it to the emergency responders and the WTC occupants in a timely fashion. As a result, many emergency responders did not get the critical information they needed to maintain good situational awareness. Some occupants did not get information that potentially could have saved their lives, such as notification that Stairwell A was possibly passable from above the impact zone.
- A preponderance of evidence indicted that lack of timely information sharing and inadequate communication capabilities likely contributed to the loss of emergency responder lives.
- The collapse of WTC 2 totally disrupted the ongoing Incident Command System Operations being carried out by FDNY, NYPD, and PAPD.
- The private ambulances and Emergency Medical Service teams that responded to the WTC had limitations to their effectiveness. They had no protective clothing. They did not have the same radios, so the other agencies could not communicate with them. Only paper records were kept of patients being treated by official and self-dispatched emergency medical units. These records were lost when the buildings collapsed.
- Communications between the emergency response agencies and the media were problematic. Critical life safety and evacuation information from the WTC towers was not communicated to the news media so that it could be broadcast to people trapped inside the WTC towers above the building fires. By bypassing the appropriate emergency response agency contact points, some media firms interfered with the on-site operations.