Verizon Frontline 2025 Public Safety Communications Survey

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Key Findings and Overview

Key Findings

Now in its fifth year, the annual Verizon Frontline Public Safety Communications Survey puts a spotlight on the public safety industry's use of technology both now and in the future.

Here are some key takeaways from this year's report:

- Access to a reliable and resilient network grew in importance year-over-year as the feature most valued by first responders for both day-to-day (65% to 75%) and emergency response (64% to 73%) communications.
- AI/smart solutions are still not yet widely deployed, but 46% of respondents expect to use this technology on a daily basis in the next five years.
- Daily use of drones and robotics by first responders is expected to triple in the next five years.

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Overview

Methodology

- This survey was conducted by Lexipol on behalf of Verizon Frontline in July 2025 among a national sample of 1,028 first responders (EMS, Fire, Police, Emergency Management, and Public Safety Answering Points/Emergency Communications Centers).

Target Survey Audience & Demographics

- Self-selected as members of Emergency Medical Services (33%), Fire (48%), Law Enforcement (34%), Emergency Management (14%), and PSAP/ECC (4%) with the ability to choose multiple agencies.

- The majority of respondents (32%) had more than 30 years of experience, followed by those with 20-30 years of experience (25%).

Public Safety Tech
On the Job

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Smartphones are currently the most used technology by public safety professionals, and that is expected to remain the case

First responders rely heavily on smartphones for mission-critical communications and that is expected to remain the case five years from now.

The daily use of tablets is expected to surpass that of land mobile radios within the next five years.
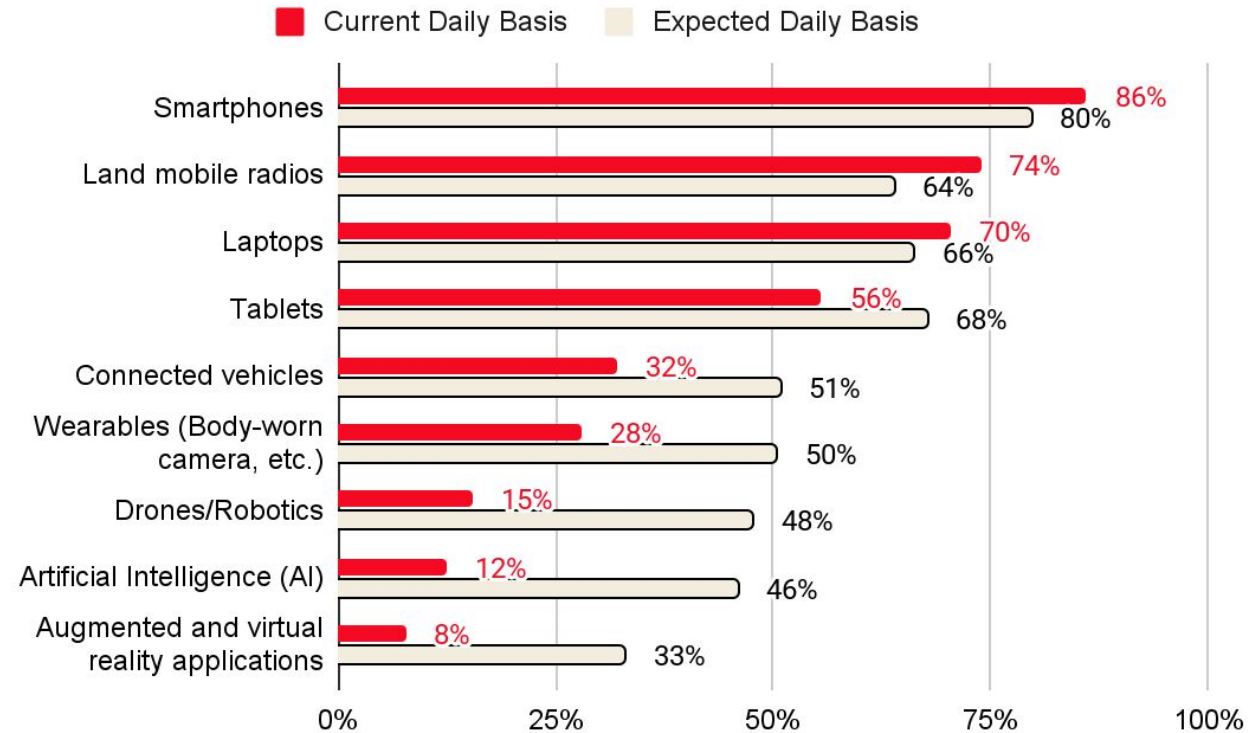
Source: Lexipol

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Legend:
■ Current Daily Basis ■ Expected Daily Basis

Technology	Current Daily Basis	Expected Daily Basis
Smartphones	86%	80%
Land mobile radios	74%	64%
Laptops	70%	66%
Tablets	56%	68%
Connected vehicles	32%	51%
Wearables (Body-worn camera, etc.)	28%	50%
Drones/Robotics	15%	48%
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	12%	46%
Augmented and virtual reality applications	8%	33%

Public safety professionals count on smartphones and drones during emergency response operations.

Public safety professionals depend on smartphones and, increasingly, drones, during emergency response operations.
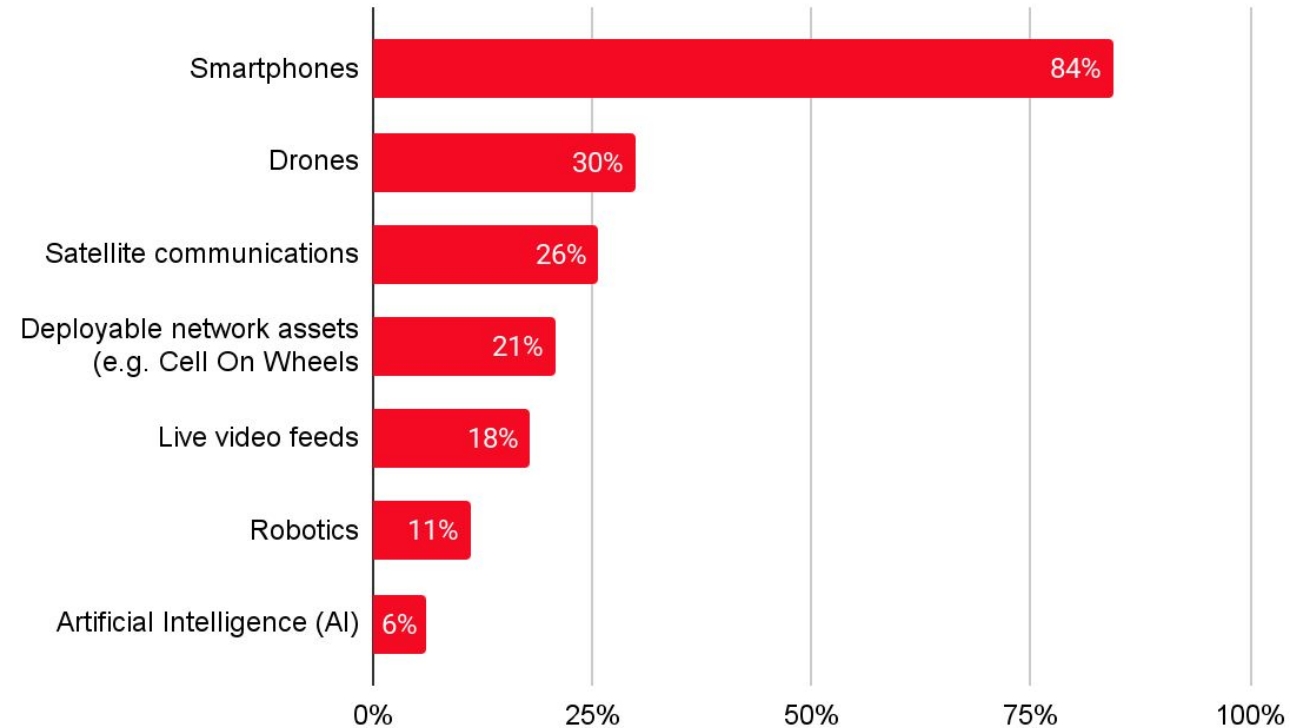
AI use during emergency response remains limited among the public safety community.

Which of the following communications technologies do you rely on during emergency response operations? (Select all that apply)

Technology	Percentage
Smartphones	84%
Drones	30%
Satellite communications	26%
Deployable network assets (e.g. Cell On Wheels	21%
Live video feeds	18%
Robotics	11%
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	6%

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Public safety professionals value a strong connection in the field

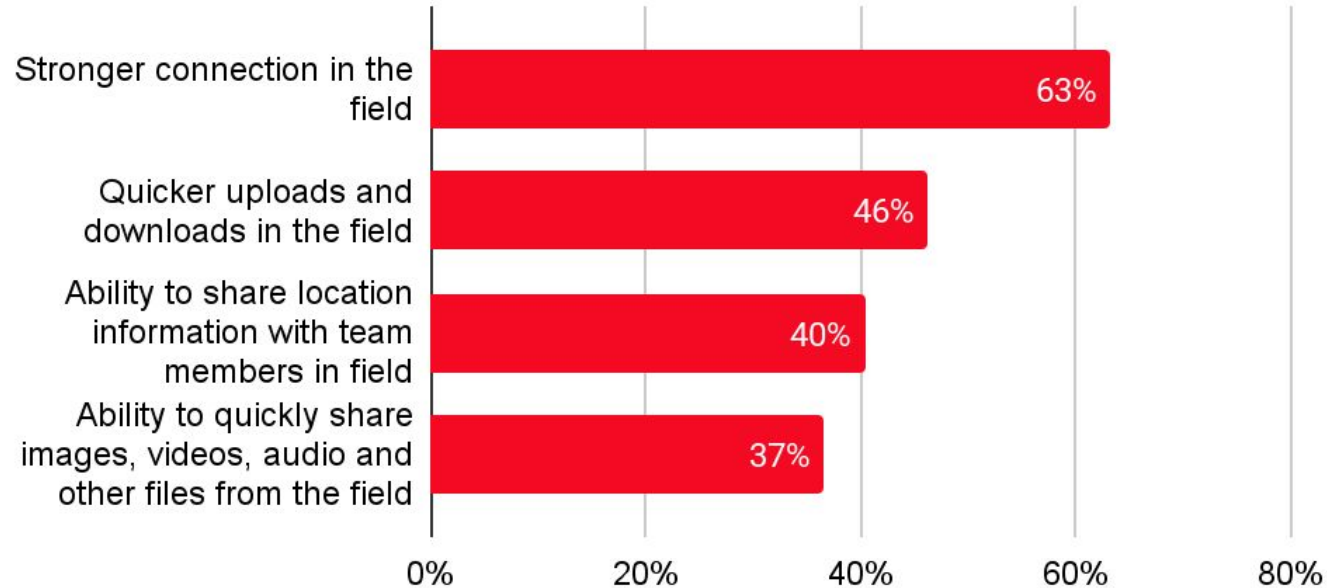Most first responders want stronger connections and quicker upload and download speeds.

The ability to share location and images wasn't far behind, but was lower on the list of desired features.

Source: Lexipol

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What features would you like but aren't getting with your current communications technology? (Select all that apply)

Feature	Percentage
Stronger connection in the field	63%
Quicker uploads and downloads in the field	46%
Ability to share location information with team members in field	40%
Ability to quickly share images, videos, audio and other files from the field	37%

AI implementation at public safety agencies remains limited...

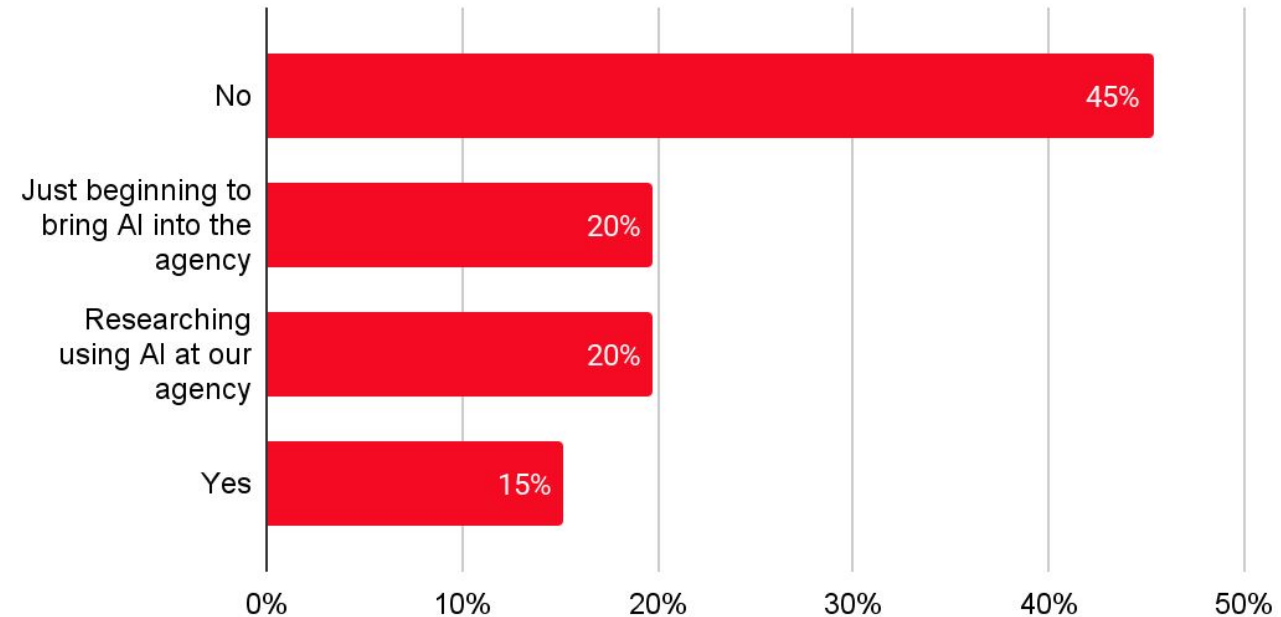35% of first responders currently use or are beginning to use AI at their agency.

The majority of public safety agencies are not currently using AI while 20% of respondents say they are researching the technology.

Source: Lexipol

Have you implemented AI technology into your agency?

No	45%
Just beginning to bring AI into the agency	20%
Researching using AI at our agency	20%
Yes	15%

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But the industry understands the importance of AI/smart solutions

The amount of respondents that see AI as a "top priority" in the future grew 12% year-over-year while the number of respondents identifying it as "important" grew 28% year-over-year.
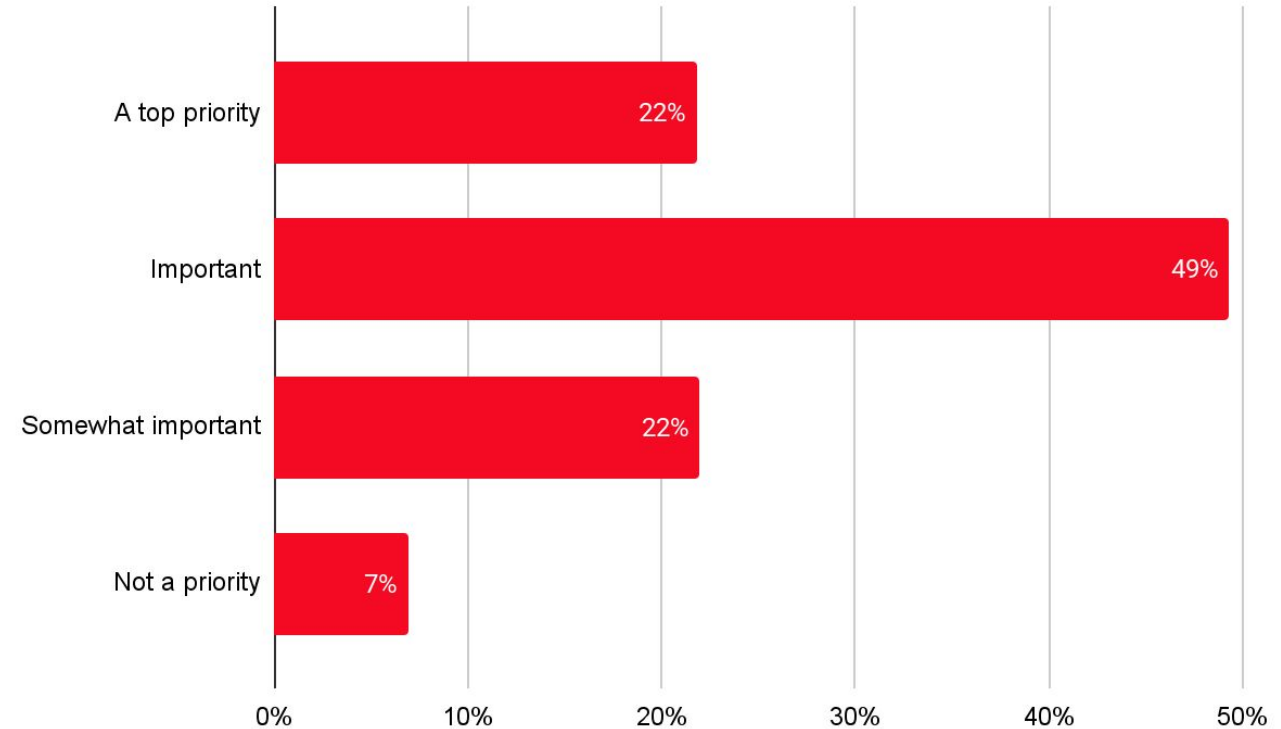
46% of respondents said they expect to use AI on a daily basis within the next five years

Source: Lexipol

How important do you think AI will be to the future of public safety?

Category	Percentage
A top priority	22%
Important	49%
Somewhat important	22%
Not a priority	7%

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Concerns and Priorities

First responders surveyed worry most about network reliability, network speed and interoperability
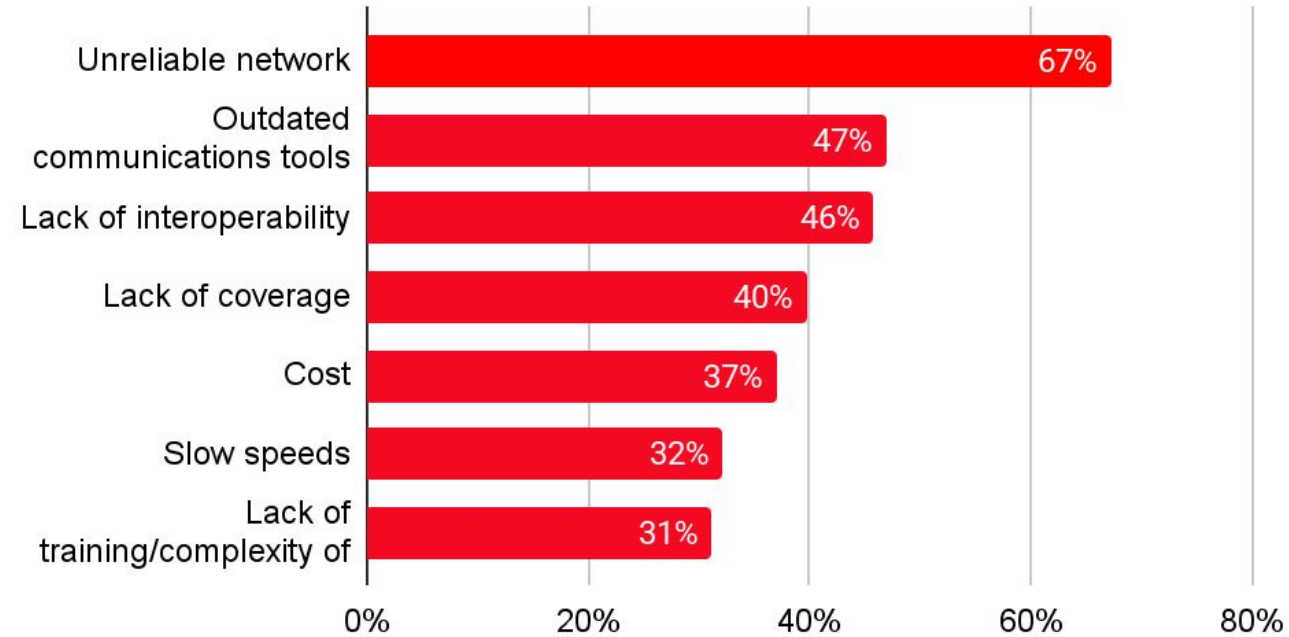
Unreliable networks remain first responders' main concern year-over-year. Outdated communication tools rose 7% compared to last year while lack of interoperability dropped by 1%.

Source: Lexipol

What are your top three concerns regarding current public safety communications technology? (select exactly three)

Concern	Percentage
Unreliable network	67%
Outdated communications tools	47%
Lack of interoperability	46%
Lack of coverage	40%
Cost	37%
Slow speeds	32%
Lack of training/complexity of	31%

Public safety professionals value a resilient and reliable network in day-to-day operations and during an emergency.
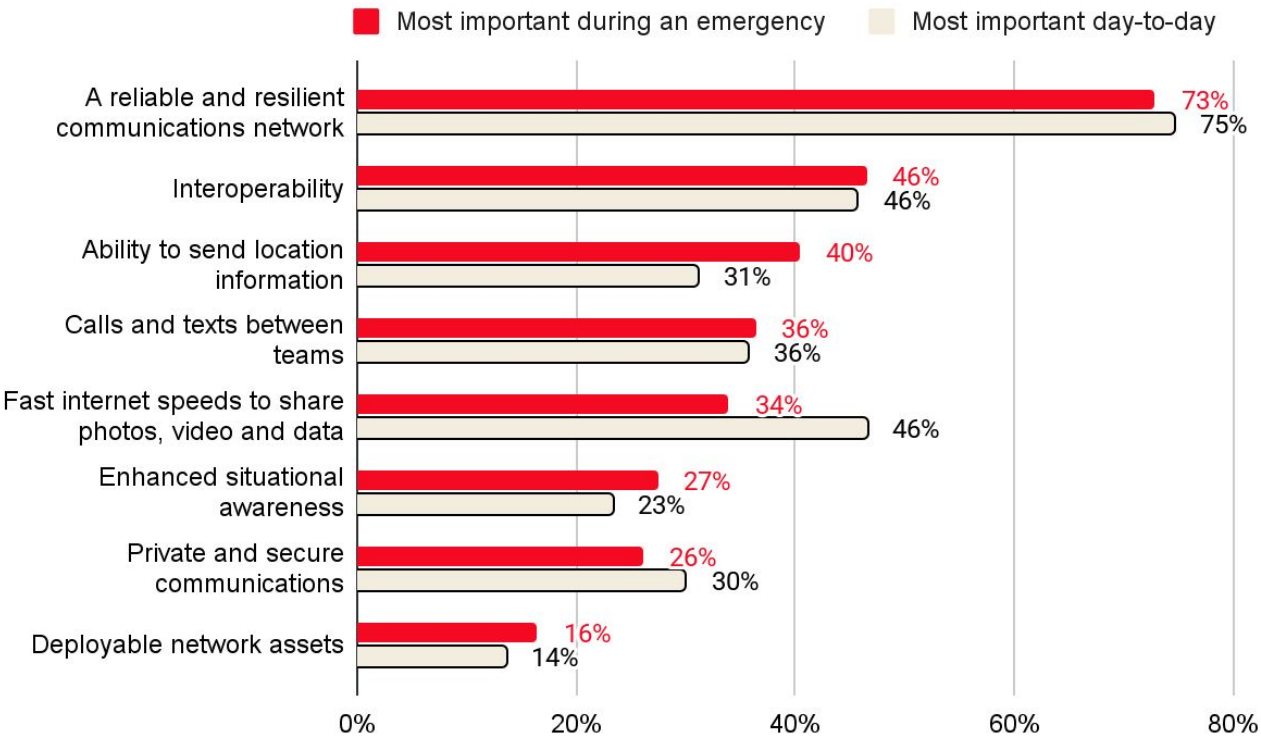
A reliable network, interoperability, and the ability to send location information were the communications capabilities first responders valued most during an emergency.

Fast internet speeds were identified as being more important during day-to-day operations than during an emergency.

Source: Lexipol

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Which three of the following are MOST important to you in your day-to-day professional communications? (Select exactly three)

Which three of the following are MOST important to you when communicating during an emergency response operation? (Select exactly three)

Legend: ■ Most important during an emergency ■ Most important day-to-day

Category	During an emergency	Day-to-day
A reliable and resilient communications network	73%	75%
Interoperability	46%	46%
Ability to send location information	40%	31%
Calls and texts between teams	36%	36%
Fast internet speeds to share photos, video and data	34%	46%
Enhanced situational awareness	27%	23%
Private and secure communications	26%	30%
Deployable network assets	16%	14%

5G network service and connected vehicles are among the top priorities for first responders.
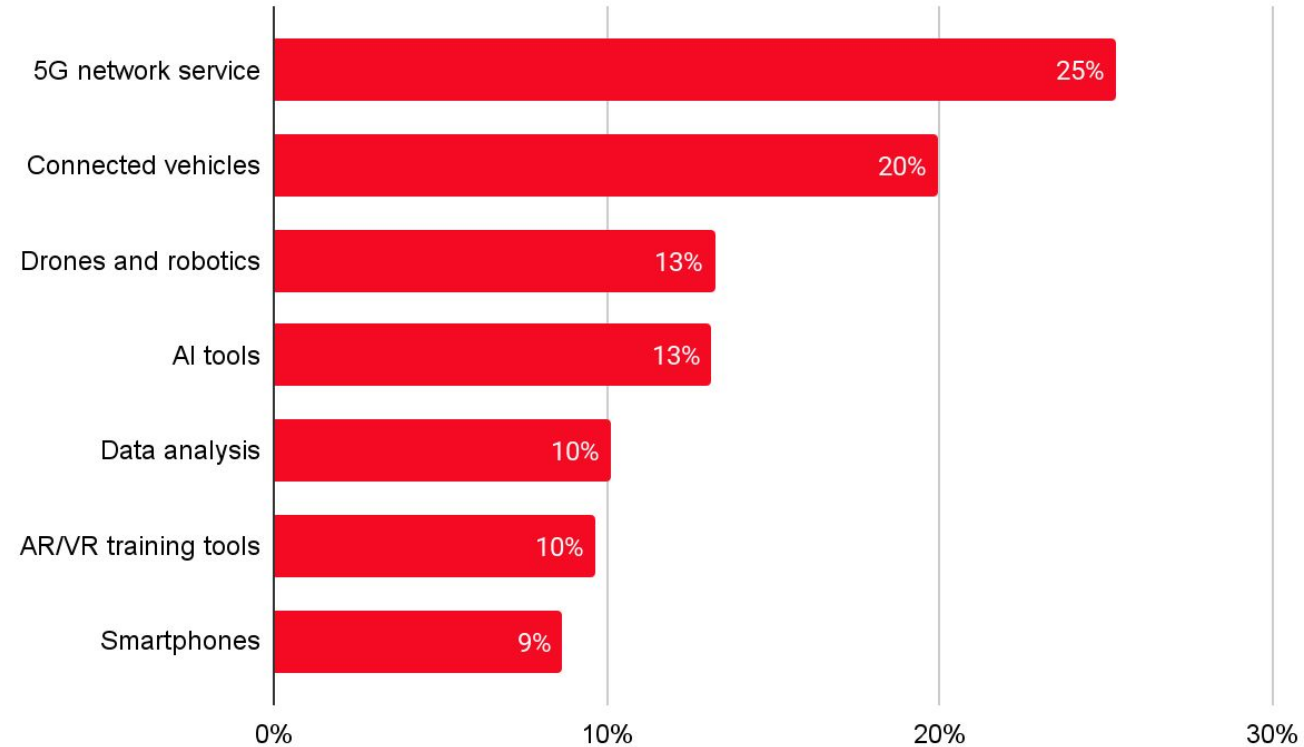
Public safety professionals see 5G network service, connected vehicles, drones and AI as the top priorities for their departments.

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Which of these technologies would you consider a top priority for your department?

Technology	Percentage
5G network service	25%
Connected vehicles	20%
Drones and robotics	13%
AI tools	13%
Data analysis	10%
AR/VR training tools	10%
Smartphones	9%

Reliability and Security

Network reliability remains the feature most critical to public safety

Network reliability is the most important factor in selecting a public safety communications provider, according to 47% of survey respondents.

Just over 13% indicated knowledge of and history of meeting first responder needs, and 12% said 5G availability and coverage area.

Security as a feature saw the largest change (+2%) from current importance to future importance.
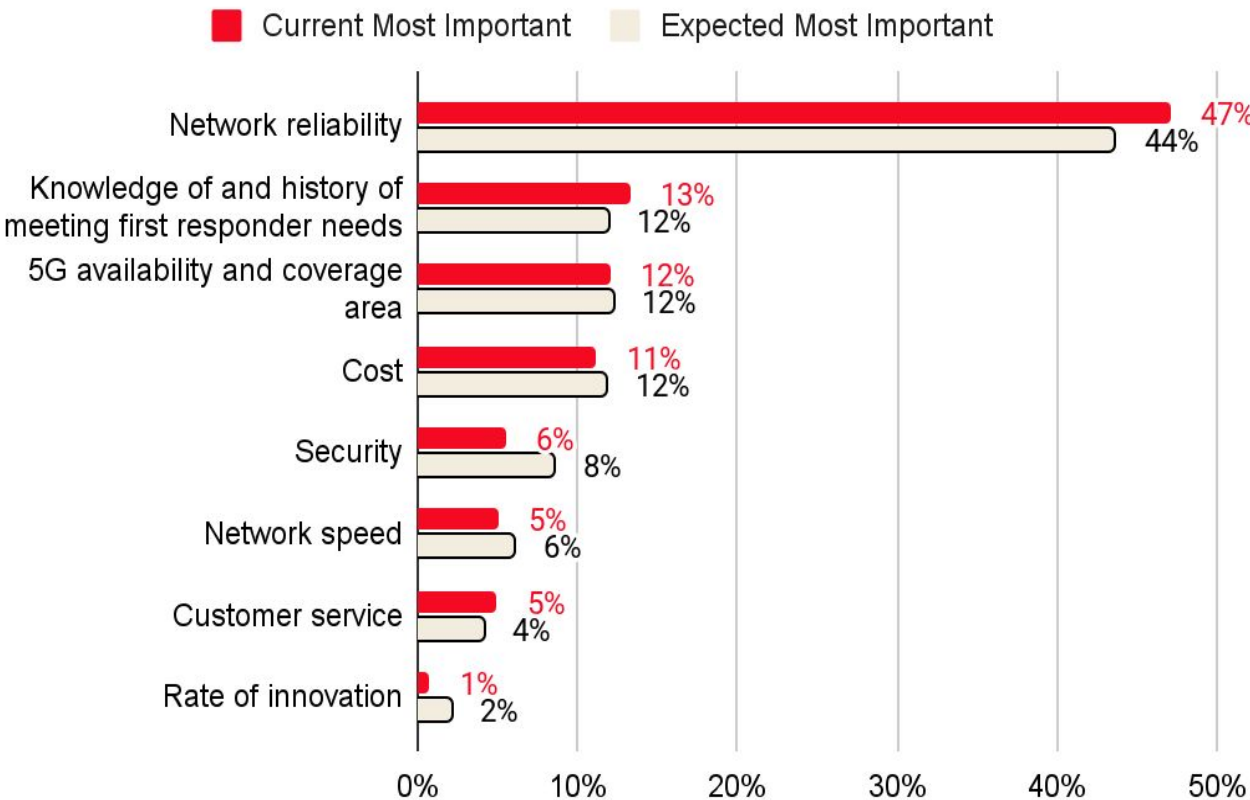
Source: Lexipol

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Which of the following factors is MOST important to you in a public safety communications provider?

Which of the following factors do you expect to be MOST important to you when selecting a public safety communications provider 5 years from now?

- Current Most Important
- Expected Most Important

Factor	Current Most Important	Expected Most Important
Network reliability	47%	44%
Knowledge of and history of meeting first responder needs	13%	12%
5G availability and coverage area	12%	12%
Cost	11%	12%
Security	6%	8%
Network speed	5%	6%
Customer service	5%	4%
Rate of innovation	1%	2%

Nearly two thirds of the public safety agencies recently implemented cybersecurity protections.

With increasing ransomware attacks and third-party breaches, cybersecurity is becoming more of a priority for public safety agencies.
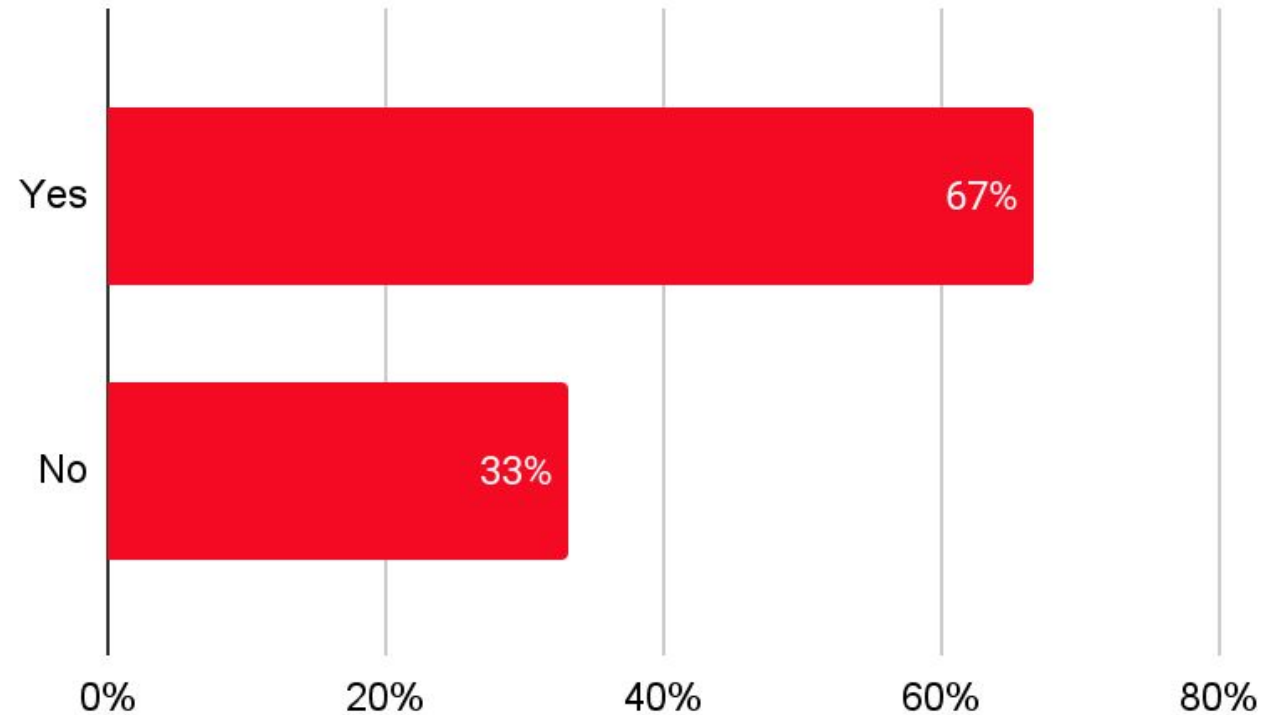
67% of public safety agencies reported incorporating cybersecurity protections into their operations within the last year.

Source: Lexipol

Has your agency implemented any cybersecurity protections in the last 12 months?

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Access to a reliable and resilient network offers better communications capabilities in the field for first responders

Better communications in the field had the highest impact at 78%, nearly double the importance of any other response.

The other benefits – enhanced situational awareness (46%), improved response time (45%), and improved decision making (42%) – fell closer together but remained significantly lower than better communications.

Source: Lexipol

How has having access to a reliable and resilient network impacted your job? (Select all that apply)