

# Cell phones not perfect in emergencies

By Frank Knutson, Wall Street Journal

Amid all the privacy concerns about cellphone tracking, one important group is arguing that location data isn't precise enough: emergency responders.

Police and others say 911 dispatchers are having trouble sending help to callers who use cellphones. The reason: unlike a landline, cellphones provide just a rough estimate – with a possible radius of a few hundred yards – of the caller's location.

Data released this summer renewed attention to the problem and set off a debate over the adequacy of the tracking data that cellphone carriers share with emergency dispatchers.

"The location of the caller is the most important thing," said Eric Parry, who oversees 911 calling technology used in Utah. "If I have a 'what,' that helps me know what I need to send. If I don't have a 'where,' then the 'what' doesn't help me in the least."

The proliferation of cellphones has been both a blessing and a headache for law enforcement officers and other emergency responders. More people with cellphones means it is easier than ever to make a quick call for help.

**Read the whole story**