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FALL 2016

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TWO-WAY RADIOS

Reliable Comms for Emergency and Off-Grid Situations

By Mike Travis

You may be permanently attached to your cell phone, but the prepared person will follow the lead of military and emergency services personnel. They deploy with two-way radios because of cell phones' reliance on a huge infrastructure and power grids makes them vulnerable to disruption. Lose one link in the chain and the system may begin to break down.

In 1996 the Family Radio System (FRS) was approved for use in the United States. Use of FRS frequencies requires no license and their location in the FM band suffers from far less interference than CB radio transmissions. Today, most personal two-way radios are hybrids, combining FRS frequencies with General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) frequencies, which provide longer range reception. Use of GMRS frequencies requires an FCC license and fee that covers a single user and their immediate family.

Effective communication is a top-tier necessity — becoming more so when times get tough. The following options are packed with features, provide a critical link between members of your group, and are surprisingly affordable.



Cobra® CXT 545

MSRP: \$89.95
www.Cobra.com

KEY SPECS AND FEATURES

- Two radios with FRS/GMRS 462-467 MHz frequency band
- 22 channels with 121 privacy codes
- Up to 26-mile range
- Uses included rechargeable NiMH batteries or 3 AA alkaline batteries
- Automatic battery-saver circuit extends battery life when not in use

The CXT 545 is a compact, high power radio that is fully waterproof and ready to take on the elements. It has 10 NOAA weather channels built in with NOAA Weather Alert to keep you up to date on important weather information. Cobra's VOX system allows hands-free operation and patented VibAlert™ provides a silent alert for incoming calls. An LED flashlight is built into the radio cabinet, providing an always-ready light source.

2 Cobra® CXT 390

MSRP: \$79.95
www.Cobra.com

KEY SPECS AND FEATURES

- Two radios with FRS/GMRS 462-467 MHz frequency band
- 22 channels with 121 privacy codes
- Up to 23-mile range
- Uses included rechargeable NiMH batteries or 3 AA alkaline batteries
- Automatic battery-saver circuit extends battery life when not in use

The CXT 390 is a powerful, feature-rich, compact radio that won't break the budget. This weather-resistant unit has 10 NOAA Weather channels and the NOAA Weather Alert system preprogrammed into its memory. Cobra's VOX system gives the CXT 390 the ability to be used hands-free and the rechargeable batteries can be charged directly with the wall charger with its Y-plug or on the supplied dual desktop dock.

5 Midland® X-Talker T77VP5

MSRP: \$99.99
www.MidlandUSA.com

KEY SPECS AND FEATURES

- Two radios with FRS/GMRS 462-467 MHz frequency band
- Up to 35-mile range
- 36 channels with 121 privacy codes
- Up to 38-mile range
- Uses included rechargeable NiMH batteries or 3 AA alkaline batteries
- Includes micro-USB direct charging cable, wall adapter, and desktop charger
- Battery meter and low battery indicator

Midland's popular X-Talker Extreme dual pack provides the user with two water-resistant T77 X-Talker GMRS two-way radios, multiple charging options and two headsets, all packaged in a heavy-duty hard carrying case. Weather Alert and Weather Scan options come standard as does Midland's eVOX hands-free operating system and silent operation capability.

3 Midland® EX37VP E+Ready Two-Way Radio Kit

MSRP: \$49.99
www.MidlandUSA.com

KEY SPECS AND FEATURES

- Two radios with FRS/GMRS 462-467 MHz frequency band
- 22 channels with 38 privacy codes
- Up to 26-mile range
- Uses included rechargeable NiMH batteries or 3 AAA alkaline batteries
- Includes micro-USB direct charging cable

The EX37VP is Midland's answer to an emergency preparedness communications kit. It includes two powerful X-Talker radios, a bright LED flashlight, a multipurpose whistle, and micro-USB charging cables, all contained in a padded softshell case. Don't let the low price fool you; these radios are water resistant, have eVOX hands-free capability and fully integrated Weather Alert systems.

6 Cobra® CXR 925

MSRP: \$109.95
www.Cobra.com

KEY SPECS AND FEATURES

- Two radios with FRS/GMRS 462-467 MHz frequency band
- 22 channels with 142 privacy codes
- Up to 35-mile range
- Uses included rechargeable lithium ion batteries
- Automatic battery-saver circuit extends battery life when not in use
- Integrated LED flashlight with S.O.S. signal capability

The CXR 925 has access to 10 NOAA weather channels and includes weather warning alert to keep you aware of the latest atmospheric developments. The ability to choose between high and low power means you can save your batteries for when you need them most and Cobra's Rewind-Say-Again digital voice recorder allows you to play back the last 20 seconds of a transmission, transmit saved messages, and record your own messages. The CXR 925 also features a hands-free VOX mode and patented VibAlert™ provides a silent alert for incoming calls.

4 Motorola® Talkabout® T260

MSRP: \$64.95
www.MotorolaSolutions.com

KEY SPECS AND FEATURES

- Two radios with FRS/GMRS 462-467 MHz frequency band
- 22 channels with 121 privacy codes
- Up to 25-mile range
- Battery life is up to 12 hours with included NiMH battery, up to 29 hours with 3 AA alkaline batteries
- Battery meter and low battery alert
- Y charging cable with dual micro-USB adapters

The Motorola T260 is a budget-friendly, lightweight, rugged radio system with all the features you would expect from a Motorola product. Motorola's iVOX hands-free ability, 11 NOAA weather channels along with the Weather Alert feature means this radio is perfect for whatever backcountry travel you might be undertaking.

7 Motorola® Talkabout® T605 H2O

MSRP: \$149.99
www.MotorolaSolutions.com

KEY SPECS AND FEATURES

- Two radios with FRS/GMRS 462-467 MHz frequency band
- 22 channels with 121 privacy codes
- Vibrating call alert
- Up to 35-mile range
- Battery life is up to 9 hours with included NiMH battery, up to 23 hours with 3AA Alkaline batteries
- Y charging cable with dual micro-USB adapters and single car charger
- Battery meter and low battery alert
- Carry case and two whistle belt clips

The Motorola T605 H2O is built to endure your most rigorous adventures. It is fully waterproof, floats, and carries an IP67 weather resistance rating. iVOX technology allows hands-free operation. It houses a built-in water-activated flashlight, 11 weather channel frequencies, dual power sources and the ability to charge via its micro-USB port.