

# Emergency alert technology for smart phones

Excerpt from a The Kim Komando Show column

Smartphones are about as cutting-edge as you can get in technology, and while they can be overwhelming for some people to use, they make a great emergency system if you set them up right. Learn about some of the inexpensive smartphones on the market.

A smartphone also doesn't have as much of a stigma attached to it as a dedicated emergency alert system, so it's possible your parent or loved one will be more likely to use it. Let's take a look at some of the user-friendly apps available you can add to any smartphone. We'll also look at a hardware add-on that comes close to what George was asking about originally.

**Fade Fall Detector (Android-Free):** Bikers, motorcyclists and other individuals prone to falls can use this app. Settings can be configured so that in the event of a fall, an alert message will be sent to predefined contacts. The app also has a feature that automatically activates the phone's speaker so the user can make an emergency call.

**Sygyic Family Locator (Android, Apple; Free):** This app keeps you connected with each member of your family, whether it be your kids or your aging parents. When in use, the app allows you to see the location of your family members, send them check-in messages, and send emergency notifications by tapping an SOS button. Additionally, you have the flexibility to set safe and unsafe zones and to receive notifications any time your loved one steps outside your predefined boundaries.

**Life Alert (Android, Apple; Free):** Yes, there's an app for that! Although this app does require a Life Alert subscription, it offers extended coverage to those who only have at-home Life Alert units. Essentially, the app turns the user's smartphone into a portable transmitter. It's simple in nature, using only a few prompts to contact the Life Alert monitoring center.

**Flic:** This small hardware button connects to your Apple or Android smartphone and can trigger one action or a complex series of actions on the phone. In this case, you can set it up to trigger an alert to an emergency contact or call an emergency service.

Flics come in different colors and are small enough to wear as a pendant or on a belt without attracting much attention. And because they're so simple the battery lasts at least 5 years, although that simplicity means it can't detect falls. One Flic plus a wearable clip costs \$34, but you can buy packs of up to 6 for \$139. Then you can stick them all around the house, and even set them to trigger different tasks.

## Smartphone pros:

- Works anywhere your mobile provider covers
- Can connect to Wi-Fi in areas of poor cellular coverage
- A flexible option for users who only need minimal monitoring
- Doesn't have the perceived stigma of an emergency medical product

## Smartphone cons:

- Have to set it up yourself
- Limited third-party monitoring
- Some smartphones are not water resistant; not great for shower environments
- Smartphones are bulky to carry around indoors
- Relatively poor battery life means they'll need charging every night