

# Improve your cell phone reception



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay



Here is a situation where neither the cell phone or a radio had service. Time to move to higher ground. (Courtesy photo/Mark Rackay)

Life was much simpler before we had cell phones. I go back to the days when the phone hung on the wall, and you had to stand to talk on it. Your limitation was the length of the cord. Our's was a party line, so you had to wait your turn to make a call.

When you called someone, and there was no answer, you just assumed they weren't home, and you tried again later. Then came the answering machine, and you no longer could escape to the woods. There were messages waiting for you, and you had to catch up on all you missed.

Now we have the cell phone, and everywhere you go, it comes along to keep you connected. Admittedly, it has its place in the outdoor world, as a convenience and as a survival tool. But in the woods and mountains, there are limitations, because of poor signal. Missed texts, no service, and dropped calls are the norm in the high country. Some of these tips may help.

Higher ground will

improve your chances of getting a signal because cell phones operate off of a line of sight. Features such as mountains, heavy tree cover, Concrete, metal objects, and rock formations can actually block the signal. If you are going to make a call, try and find the highest and most open location to provide the best signal. Hold the phone in the air at arm's length and rotate around until you find reception.

If you have one of those cases that allow you to call and text, without removing the phone, lose it. You don't want anything blocking your phones antenna.

When your phone is on, and you have no service, it will constantly search for service, thereby draining your battery down. Start out with a full charge, and

keep the phone off, or in airplane mode until you need to use it. If your battery is low, you may have a difficult time getting good service.

I remind everyone to carry an extra power source for their phone. These little portable battery packs will hold a charge for months and power up your phone when you need it. The pack is very small and compact, so taking it with you is no problem. I buy the 20000mAh size and it will charge your phone three or four times.

Always start by turning the airplane mode off and on. When you are having connection troubles, this is the easiest fix, especially when you are moving around. It forces your phone to find the best signal in the area. If that doesn't help,

try a full restart.

Another troubleshooting step is to remove your SIM card, if your phone has one, and place it back in with the phone turned on. If the card is dirty, clean it first.

Be sure your phone software is up to date. This is something you will want to do at home, before you head to the woods. Putting off those annoying updates can lead to a weaker connection. Bug fixes and connectivity improvements are often included in those updates.

I hate to say this, but sometimes it is best to upgrade your phone. I have a buddy who still uses an old flip-phone, that was probably left over from the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Phone technology changes rapidly, and if you are hanging on to a five or ten-year-old model, it may be giving you a bad signal. Old technology can prevent your phone from keeping up with the signals and frequencies of the newer cell towers are putting out.

Another problem I see is people with different carriers in the woods. One may have great service with their carrier, while their friend, who is standing next to them

and has no service, is with a different carrier. Remember, all carriers are not created equally. The discount, "why pay more" carriers might not be the best choice. I know of a husband-and-wife team that have different carriers so there is a chance one may have coverage when the other doesn't.

You might consider investing in a cell phone signal booster. They are available in a variety of models. And can be used at home or in a vehicle. When you are experiencing unreliable signal due to trees or cell tower distances, a cell signal booster can help. It utilizes an outdoor antenna to capture the existing signal, an amplifier to boost the signal, and an antenna to broadcast the boosted signal.

The first downside to the booster is the cost. A set-up can run over a thousand bucks, but there are cheaper options. Check with your phone carrier to see what options are available.

The second downside is the unit is not exactly something you can carry around in your pack. It has to be connected to a vehicle or a base unit. If you have a camper or

RV, or if you are camping in one place for an extended time, a booster might be the answer. Remember, you must have some signal reception for the booster to work. A booster in a place with no reception has nothing to boost.

I try and keep the cell phone turned off when I want to escape the world and head outdoors. It can always be turned on when I need it. The cell phone has become quite a life-saving device for outdoor people, and I don't leave home without it. My wife sees to that.

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Big Game Harvest Survey data is vital to CPW wildlife managers and will be used to inform deer, elk, and pronghorn season and license setting for 2026 and beyond. (Courtesy photo/CPW)

## Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Big Game Harvest Survey will close on February 17

SPECIAL TO THE MDP

CPW randomly selected approximately 170,000 deer, elk, and pronghorn license holders to participate in the 2025 Big Game Harvest Survey, and the deadline to complete the survey is fast approaching. The data collected through this survey is vital to CPW wildlife managers and will be used to inform deer, elk, and pronghorn season and license setting for 2026 and beyond. Your response is important, even if you did not hunt or harvest!

Selected hunters are notified via email, text message, and/or live-operator phone call that they are eligible to complete the 2025 Big Game Harvest Survey. Hunters who have been selected are encouraged to complete their survey before Feb. 17 by clicking on the link in the email or text message, visiting [survey.colobgharvest.com](http://survey.colobgharvest.com), or by calling toll-free at 1-855-9BG-HARV (1-855-924-4278). Only selected license holders are eligible to complete the survey.

During the quick survey, selected hunters will be asked where and when they hunted, whether they harvested, what they harvested, and whether they were satisfied with the herd. They will also have the option to answer five additional questions on crowding, satisfaction, and preferences for future herd management.

Big game harvest reports from past seasons are available on CPW's website. 2025 reports will be finalized and posted in March.