

ASK THE EXPERTS



When It Comes to Public Safety, Emergency Communication Solutions Are Much More Than Just Intercoms

INTRODUCTION

This Code Blue® Ask The Experts article examines the differences between emergency communications solutions and intercom products. Any campus official responsible for public safety at education, critical infrastructure, corporate, or government properties can benefit from learning about the differences.





Code Blue Help Points® for Emergency Communications

Code Blue Help Points go beyond basic emergency communication—they serve as vital beacons of safety in critical situations. *They incorporate all the essential features, capabilities, and specifications outlined in our comparison tables (pages 3 & 4).*

Our Help Points are durable, reliable emergency phone towers and call boxes, designed to ensure quick access to assistance when it matters most. Each Help Point can be customized to meet specific needs, from paint and graphics to configuration and more. Additionally, select models can function as non-emergency intercoms, providing even greater flexibility.



Advanced Comparisons

Considerations	Emergency Communications	Intercommunications (or just intercoms)
Technology - Diagnostics and Reporting	Eliminate manual checks. Utilizes cloud-based platform or on premises platforms to proactively monitor configurations, connection status and system performances while providing useful reporting functionality.	Not available with traditional wired intercom, and scarcely available with very limited functionality on some IP non-emergency designed intercoms.
Technology - Robust and Redundant	Maintain uninterrupted calls during power outages or network failures with features like battery backup and automatic failover functionality.	Utilizes traditional communication infrastructure, relying on wired lines or internal communication networks.
Technology - Focus on Reliability	Designed for minimal points of failure, ensuring functionality under stress or crisis conditions.	Generally designed to hit lower price points with indoor environmental conditions in mind.
Compliance	Must adhere to safety regulations, such as the Clery Act in the U.S., which mandates timely warnings and campus safety measures. Often equipped with ADA-compliant features like Braille, visual indicators, or hands-free operation.	No specific emergency compliance requirements; governed by campus operational choices.
Features - Markings	Typically marked with bright colors and clear labels like “EMERGENCY” for quick identification.	Less conspicuous, often unmarked or labeled with specific departmental identifiers.
Features - Direct Contact	Through various IP methods, connect or redirect calls to campus security, local emergency services, or a 24/7 monitoring center.	Connects to specific offices, departments, or service areas.
Features - Ease of Use	Usually, a single button or a simple interface for quick activation in stressful situations but includes (or can include) other automated items like speakers, paging, lighting interfaces, and blue lights.	May provide specific options for non-emergency services.

ESSENTIAL COMPARISONS

Campus emergency communications and intercommunications (or just intercoms) serve distinct purposes, and their differences lie in functionality, design, and usage context.



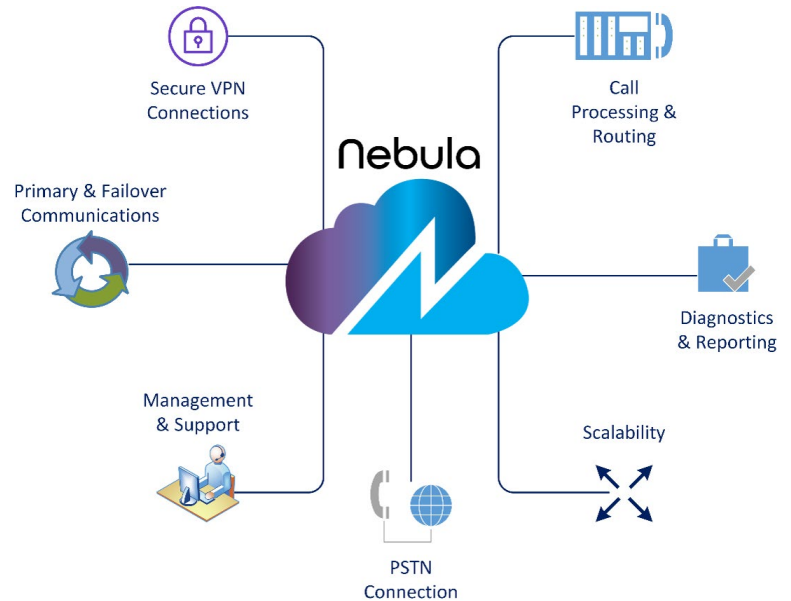
Learn More:
[Hidden Benefits of Blue-Light Emergency Phones](#)

Considerations	Emergency Communications	Intercommunications (or just intercoms)
Primary Purpose	Provide immediate access to owner responses and emergency services, such as police, fire, or medical assistance.	Facilitate general communication between individuals or departments within a campus.
Primary Focus	Crisis response and public safety.	Everyday coordination and administrative support.
Primary Examples	Reporting suspicious activity, crime, medical emergencies, or requesting urgent assistance.	Requesting information, internal communication between staff, or accessing building and concierge services.
Location	Strategically placed in high-traffic or vulnerable areas such as venues, parking lots, walkways, or isolated zones.	Found in office buildings, residence halls, or administrative areas where day-to-day communication is required.
Audience	Accessible to anyone on campus, including students, staff, and visitors, regardless of technical proficiency.	Designed for internal communication among campus personnel or specific user groups.
Peace of Mind	Delivered at first sight.	Never delivered.
Instinctive Familiarity	Naturally enabled.	Must be acquired.
Admissions	Proven positive impact on boosting enrollment as parents and students are looking for emergency communication assurances.	No impact.
Accessibility	Often installed with bright lights, signs, or sounds to draw attention during emergencies. Minimal interface ensures ease of use, even in panic situations.	Positioned for functionality rather than visibility. Will require familiarity with the system for effective use.
Brand Exposure and Risk	Minimized.	Not minimized.
Evaluating Total Cost	Ensures value (benefits & price) drives decision and avoids degrading public safety and trust.	Offers a lower price point for reduced quality and value, often leading to a higher total cost over time.

Code Blue Nebula[®] Solutions

Code Blue's Nebula Solution provides a robust platform that is a future-proof hub for all emergency communication needs.

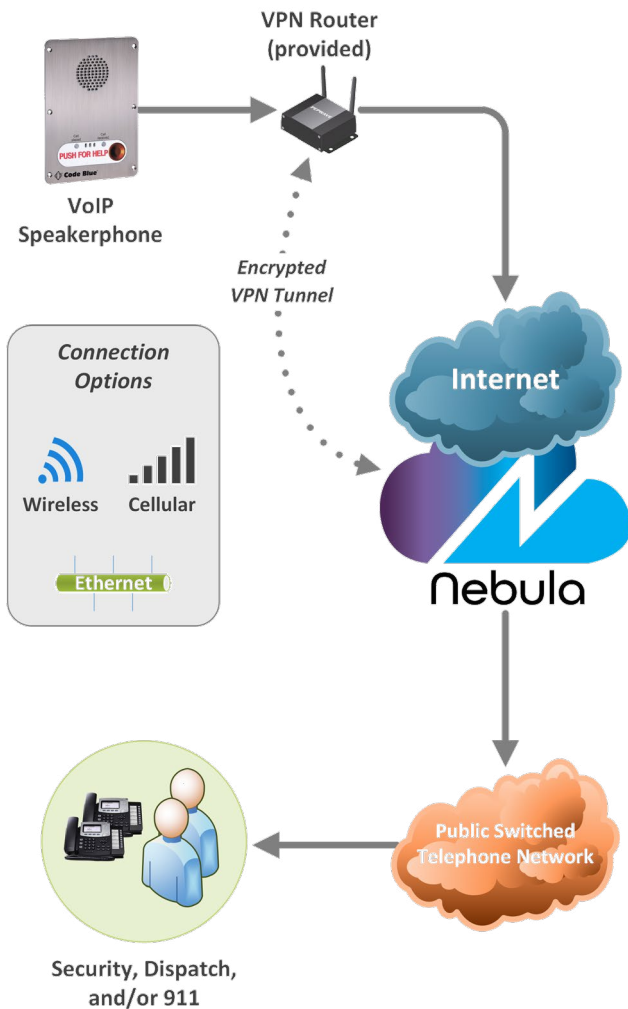
- LAN, WAN, Wi-Fi, and 4G LTE/5G connectivity; multiple connections available for redundancy
- Cloud-based SIP registration
- Diagnostics and reporting
- DID/e911 support
- Ability to connect multiple locations to a centralized system IP and analog device support



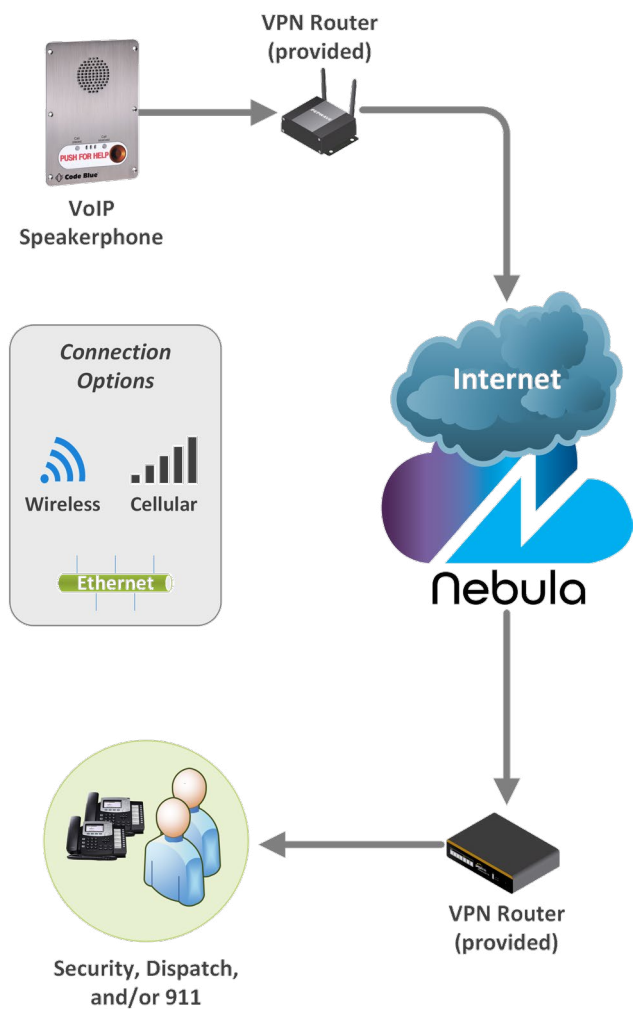
For More Information:
[Nebula Cloud Capabilities](#)
[Why Choose Nebula Cloud](#)



DID/e911 Call Routing



Extension-extension Call Routing





Takeaways

1. Officials should consider only deploying emergency communication systems for that purpose.
2. Using an intercom for emergency communications may be cheap. Still, the overall cost will be much higher because emergency communications features will be demanded by the community on-site, and adding on, vs. doing it right the first time, always costs more.
3. The best way to mitigate risks is to use an emergency communications solution that was designed for that purpose, markings, functions, routing, technology, up-time, and many other considerations.
4. Blue light emergency communication devices serve as a deterrent to crime. Their visibility indicates a swift connection to emergency services, likely discouraging criminal activity nearby.

Conclusion

At Code Blue, we provide more than safety hardware—we offer solutions that enable leaders to deliver a higher standard of care on their campuses. From advanced communications devices to customized phone and cloud data services, we are making a difference, one campus at a time.

Please consider contacting Code Blue for help with the standard of care on your campus: <https://codeblue.com/contact>