BUYING GUIDE

Fire Hydrant Location App Buying Guide

What to Look For Before You Choose

What crews need in the field, the questions to ask every vendor and a checklist for comparing your options.

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INTRODUCTION

A map pin alone is not enough

Crews need hydrant information while they are making decisions, not after they return to the station. A fire hydrant location app can put nearby water sources in front of personnel quickly. Before comparing vendors, departments should know what the app has to do in the field, where the hydrant data will come from and who will keep it current.

START HERE

Start with connectivity

Hydrant information is most needed in the places where cell service is often weakest. If your crews work in rural areas, large buildings or spots where the signal drops, find out what an app can still show with a weak or no connection before you look at anything else.

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STEP 1

Who should be involved in choosing a hydrant app?

Hydrant information touches more than one team, so the choice shouldn't rest with one person.

Operations and company officers

Who will use the map on calls.

Your hydrant program team

Who handles inspections, flow testing and maintenance.

Water utility or GIS contact

Who may own the source hydrant data.

IT or records staff

Who will handle devices, access and integration.

Agree early on the problem you're solving. Faster hydrant lookup on calls, better inspection tracking and more accurate data are related goals, but they can point to different tools.

STEP 2

What features matter most in a fire hydrant location app?

Start with what crews need under pressure, then work back to what keeps that information reliable.



Works with weak or no signal

The map should work on the devices crews already carry, including where cell service drops. Ask what crews can still see and do with no connection.



Accurate locations

A hydrant shown on the wrong side of a road or behind a blocked entrance causes confusion. Look for a simple way to correct a position.



Status and access notes

Crews should see whether a hydrant is in service and whether anything limits access, without opening several records.



Connected inspection and flow test records

A location means more when it's tied to recent inspections, flow results and maintenance history.



A correction workflow

Field personnel should be able to flag a problem, and someone should be able to verify it.



GIS compatibility

Ask whether the app can import or sync existing hydrant data instead of rebuilding it by hand.

STEP 3

Where will your hydrant data come from?

Many departments don't own the original hydrant data. It often sits with the water utility or a municipal GIS team.

Water utility or GIS hydrant layer → **Hydrant location app** → **Crews in the field** → **Corrections verified and sent back**

Before buying, find out:

- ☑ Who maintains the current hydrant layer, and how accurate it is
- ☑ Whether the data can be imported into the new app, and in what format
- ☑ How changes will move between the utility, the department and the app
- ☑ Who has final say when two records disagree

Without a plan for this, even a well-designed app will gradually show outdated information.

STEP 4

What questions should you ask hydrant app vendors?

Bring these to every demo so you can compare answers side by side.

1. How do we load our existing hydrant data, and who does the work?
2. **What can crews still see and do with limited or no connectivity?**
3. How does a crew member report a wrong location or an out-of-service hydrant?
4. What do crews see on a phone or tablet, and how many taps does it take?
5. How are hydrant locations tied to inspections, flow tests and maintenance records?
6. Can hydrant data be seen from incident response or pre-plans?
7. What does training and onboarding look like, and who supports us after go-live?
8. Can we export our data if we ever switch systems?

STEP 5

What are the warning signs during a demo?

Be cautious if a vendor:

- **Can't explain or show how the app behaves in low-connectivity areas**
- Only demonstrates sample data and can't show how your own data would load
- Has no clear process for corrections from the field
- Keeps hydrant mapping completely separate from inspection and testing records
- Leaves data ownership or export rights unclear

STEP 6

How do you test a hydrant app before buying?

Ask for a trial or guided test in a familiar first-due area. Have a crew:

1. Find a hydrant near a known address
2. Check the details shown for that hydrant
3. Do the same in an area with weak or no signal
4. Report a correction and see how long it takes to show up

A practical test like this shows whether the workflow fits your department better than a polished demonstration can.

CHECKLIST

Hydrant location app buying checklist

Use this list to compare vendors before you decide.

- [ ] Stakeholders identified (operations, hydrant program, utility or GIS, IT)
- [ ] **Low-connectivity behavior tested in the field**
- [ ] Source of hydrant data and owner confirmed
- [ ] Import process and format confirmed with vendor
- [ ] Field correction workflow demonstrated
- [ ] Mobile view tested by a crew
- [ ] Link to inspections, flow testing and maintenance confirmed
- [ ] Training, support and data export terms reviewed

Notes

WHERE FIREWORKS FITS

Hydrant mapping connected to the rest of your records

Fireworks hydrant management maps hydrants with GIS and offers map, list and mobile views. To add a new hydrant or fix one that's off, drop it on the map and drag it to its exact location. Crews can record flow tests on site from a phone or tablet, and hydrant data connects to incident response, pre-plans and inspections.

GIS mapping | Drop in and drag to exact location | Map, list and mobile views | On-site flow testing | Maintenance history

FAQS

Frequently asked questions

What is a fire hydrant location app?

A mobile or web tool that shows fire personnel where hydrants are, usually on a map, along with details such as status, access notes and inspection history.

Can a hydrant map replace inspection records?

No. Finding a hydrant and documenting its inspection or testing history serve related but different needs. The most useful setup keeps both connected.

Who should be able to update hydrant locations?

That's up to each department, but write it down. Many let field crews flag corrections and have a designated person verify them.

Do we need our water utility's data to get started?

Not always, but it helps. Starting from an existing GIS layer usually saves time compared with mapping every hydrant by hand.

Does EPR Fireworks include hydrant mapping?

Yes. Fireworks includes GIS hydrant mapping alongside inspections, flow testing and maintenance records. New hydrants can be dropped on the map and dragged to their exact location.

NEXT STEP

See hydrant management in your own first-due area

Bring your questions and your hydrant data. We'll walk through it with you.

Schedule a Call

eprfireworks.com/schedule-a-call

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