

The Entry Phone Decision

A short briefing for boards and property managers on why entry phone systems are reaching end of life, what to do about it, and how to compare the options

Twelve pages. If your building runs a MESH, Verex or other legacy entry system, sections 2 and 7 are the ones to read first. A full technical reference edition, with complete sourcing for every claim made here, is available on request.



Summary

The lobby entry phone is the most-used security device in a residential building and, in a large part of the Canadian condominium stock, the one running on the oldest technology. Three things have changed, and together they make this a decision that belongs on a board agenda rather than in a maintenance budget.

- The telephone network that most entry phones depend on is being withdrawn, and as of 2026 carriers are no longer required to notify building owners directly when it happens in their neighbourhood.
- The legacy platforms still in service are in worse condition than most boards realise — though Verex and MESH are in quite different positions, and should not be treated as one problem.
- The replacement decision is now a choice between architectures, and the published contracts of the best-known alternatives differ sharply in what happens if a payment is missed or a vendor changes course.

This briefing sets out what has changed, what a board should establish about its own building, and how to compare what it will be offered. Condoplex makes a case in section 5, and identifies where its own claims should be tested.

The evidence, in one page

Nine findings carry most of the argument. Each is drawn from a regulator, a manufacturer's own document, or peer-reviewed research, and each is cited in full in the technical reference edition.

Finding	Source and date
The FCC has removed the requirement for carriers to file copper retirement notices; public notice may now be a posting on the carrier's own website	FCC 26-19, adopted 26 March 2026, effective 20 May 2026
AT&T is approved to discontinue service across more than 30% of its copper footprint, beginning 15 November 2026	FCC discontinuance application granted 13 January 2026
Copper decommissioning in Canada proceeds without active regulatory oversight; one Toronto neighbourhood received about three months' notice	CRTC commissioner's public comments; Bell notice of service end 4 November 2026
The most widely installed telephone entry system in Canada is, by its manufacturer's own manual, "designed to work only with POTS"	Mircom TX3 manual LT-969 v7, March 2023
A second legacy manufacturer states it "does not recommend using POTS as a connection option"	DoorKing Product Reference Guide, January 2026
All Interlogix technical support — covering the Verex platform — ended 31 December 2021; production stopped end of 2019	Carrier Fire & Security wind-down announcement, September 2019
The last Verex Director release targets Windows XP through Windows 7 and SQL Server 2005 — unsupported by Microsoft since 2014-2020	Verex A&E specification v4.9.1; Microsoft Lifecycle Policy
Enterphone MESH's original manufacturer sold its assets in a distressed transaction; the line has changed hands twice since	Viscount Systems, December 2018; Identiv 2019; Vitaprotech/Hirsch 2024

Finding	Source and date
Legacy 125 kHz proximity fobs are commercially cloned for \$20-\$30 on site, using equipment costing under \$200	ACMO CM Magazine, Fall 2021; CCI Condovoice, Summer 2017

1 Why the Phone Line Is Disappearing

Most entry phones built before roughly 2015 are dialers: a visitor selects a name, the panel seizes a telephone line and dials the resident. That architecture depends entirely on a conventional telephone circuit, and that circuit is being retired.

In March 2026 the United States Federal Communications Commission removed the requirement that carriers file copper retirement notices; reasonable notice may now be given by a posting on the carrier's own website. AT&T is approved to discontinue service across more than thirty per cent of its copper footprint, beginning 15 November 2026.

Canada has less protection, not more. There is no Canadian equivalent of the FCC discontinuance process, and a sitting CRTC commissioner has publicly acknowledged that copper decommissioning is proceeding without active regulatory oversight. Bell began decommissioning in 2022 and works neighbourhood by neighbourhood: residents of Toronto's Swansea area received written notice in August 2026 that their copper home phone service would end on 4 November 2026 — about three months. Lifeline Canada, which supplies medical alert devices, says it receives no coordinated notice at all, and that roughly forty per cent of its customers use devices that plug into a copper jack.

THE COMPARISON THAT SHOULD CONCENTRATE ATTENTION

A medical alert pendant on a copper line is the same class of asset as a lobby entry phone: a low-bandwidth, life-relevant device quietly dependent on a dial tone, owned by someone nobody told. If the sector serving vulnerable seniors gets three months and no coordination, a condominium corporation should not expect more.

The clearest evidence does not come from Condoplex. It comes from the manufacturers who built the installed base. Mircom's current TX3 manual states the position plainly:

...designed to work only with POTS. Non-configurable PBX systems are not supported.

Mircom, TX3 Telephone Access System Installation and Operation Manual, LT-969 v7, March 2023

DoorKing's January 2026 product guide is blunter: the company "does not recommend using POTS (Plain Old Telephone Service) as a connection option." When two legacy manufacturers disown the transport their own installed base runs on, the question is no longer whether to migrate off it — only whether on the building's schedule or the carrier's.

2 What Your Building Probably Has

Two platform names dominate this conversation in the Canadian market. They are frequently mentioned together and they are in materially different positions. Getting this right determines whether a board overspends or underestimates.

Issue	Verex	Enterphone MESH	Condoplex
Manufacturer status	Wound down 2019; brand extinct	Original manufacturer insolvent 2018; now owned by Hirsch after two changes of ownership	Current Canadian manufacturer
Current support	Ended. None since 31 December 2021	Model-specific status must be confirmed in writing	Current supported release
Head-end	Legacy Windows and SQL Server, unsupported by Microsoft since 2014–2020	Browser-managed Linux appliance; revision dependent	Maintained Linux platform, managed updates
Upgrade path	No manufacturer path exists	Potential path to the current Enterphone line	Staged migration, existing devices retained where possible
Credentials	Commonly legacy unencrypted proximity	Installation dependent — audit before assuming	Encrypted credentials available
What to do first	Plan replacement; it is an end-of-life asset	Request a written support-status letter before spending anything	Site survey and staged proposal

2.1 Two things worth knowing about Verex

First, the management software matters more than the hardware. The last release of Verex Director runs on Windows XP through Windows 7 with SQL Server 2005 — platforms Microsoft stopped patching between 2014 and 2020. In a building still on Verex there is very likely a computer in a service room, on the building network, unpatched for years, holding the access credentials of every resident, that cannot be replaced because the software will not install on anything current.

Second — and this is routinely missed — Verex made access control and intrusion equipment, not entry phones. A building described as "running Verex" almost certainly has a lobby panel from a different manufacturer wired to a Verex head-end. That is two obsolescence problems with two costs, and any proposal that does not distinguish them has not surveyed the building properly.

2.2 And one about MESH

Enterphone MESH is not discontinued, and a board should be sceptical of any supplier who says it is. Hirsch still sells the Enterphone line; the MESH name has simply been retired from the catalogue. The accurate concern is different: the original manufacturer, Viscount, stated it had "faced significant hurdles in delivering its product" and sold its assets in a distressed transaction in 2018, and the line has changed hands twice since.

THE FREE STEP THAT ANSWERS THIS

Write to Hirsch and ask for a written support-status letter for your specific panel model and firmware: is it supported, for how long, what is the security update commitment, and what is the upgrade path and cost. It costs nothing. What comes back — or does not — is the most useful evidence you will gather.

3 What Keeps Working When the Internet Goes Down

This is the question that separates architectures, and it is the one boards least often ask. A cloud-dependent system and a system with a server in the building behave very differently on a bad day.

Ask every bidder to answer it function by function, in writing. Condoplex's own answer is below. The reason it looks like this is that the Condoplex server sits on the building's own network, so losing the internet link severs the building from the outside world, not from itself.

Function	Condoplex, during a loss of building internet
Credential authentication at readers	Continues — authenticated locally
Door release from the entry panel	Continues
Visitor call to the guard or concierge station	Continues, with audio and video
Guard door and elevator release	Continues
Suite panel arm and disarm; suite alarms and panic stations	Continues
Audit logging	Continues — written locally, synchronised on reconnection
Resident SIP calls to telephones	Depends on configuration — continues where the trunk is on premise
Mobile app calling from outside the building	Stops until the link returns
Cloud backup, remote support, software updates	Pause; resume on reconnection

Two qualifications belong with that, because the claim is often made too broadly. Whether a resident's telephone still rings during an outage depends on how calling is configured — a design decision to settle at specification. And "no cloud required" means exactly what the table says: cloud services are used for backup, remote support, updates and reaching residents away from the building. What is not cloud-dependent is the operation of the building's own security.

4 Comparing What You Will Be Offered

Every claim in this table is drawn from the manufacturer's own published manual, price list or terms of service — not from third-party commentary — so that none of it can be dismissed as a competitor's characterisation.

	Condoplex	Mircom TX3 classic telephone access	ButterflyMX	2N	DoorKing
Transport	VoIP / SIP native	POTS only, per the manufacturer's manual	IP / cloud	SIP native	Cellular or VoIP; POTS not recommended
Two-way video to resident app	Yes	No — audio entry	Yes	Yes	Limited
Cloud required to function	No	No	Yes	No (My2N optional)	Yes for cellular / VoIP

	Condoplex	Mircom TX3 classic telephone access	ButterflyMX	2N	DoorKing
Mandatory recurring fee	No — optional services	None	Yes, per unit	One-time licence	Yes, per door
Guard / concierge station	Native, single queue	Building systems integration	Not found in published material	Not found	Not found
In-suite security panels	Native, multi-generation	Separate product line	Not found	Not found	Not found
If the relationship ends	Hardware owned; keeps working	Keeps working	Terms silent on hardware; no SLA	SIP endpoint continues locally	Connected service may be suspended; data deleted after 120 days
Origin	Canada	Canada	United States	Czech Republic	United States

WHAT THIS TABLE DOES AND DOES NOT COVER

The Mircom column describes the classic TX3 telephone access configuration — the one most likely to be in a legacy building today. Mircom also offers the TX3 Touch video line and, since May 2025, Mircom Cloud Services with integrated VoIP on subscription. Those change the transport and video rows, and move Mircom into the same recurring-fee category as the cloud platforms. Ask for that configuration and price it over ten years alongside the rest.

On DoorKing, the published terms establish that the connected calling service may be disabled for non-payment and subscriber data deleted after prolonged inactivity. They do not establish that every local door function stops — ask DoorKing directly which functions survive a suspension, in writing.

One further point on the cloud platforms, because it is easy to miss in a demonstration. ButterflyMX's published terms of service reserve the right to suspend, disable or delete an account and access to the services "with or without notice, for any or no reason," provide the service "as is" and "as available" with availability expressly disclaimed, offer no uptime guarantee, and say nothing about what the installed hardware does if the service ends. That may still be an acceptable trade for the resident experience. It should be an informed one.

5 The Condoplex Case

Four things, each of which can be checked rather than taken on trust.

1. It is a VoIP endpoint, not a dialer. There is no subscriber line for a carrier to decommission, and no monthly line charge for the front door. Section 1 applies to competitors, not to this architecture.
2. Two-way video reaches the resident's phone and the guard station on the same call. A resident sees the visitor from anywhere and releases the door from the app; the concierge sees the same call on a screen that already shows suite alarms, elevator activity and panic events, with every action logged automatically.

3. One database serves the entry phones, suite panels, elevator control, access control and the mobile app. A resident who moves out is removed once. The audit trail is a property of the architecture rather than a paid module — which is the direct answer to the failure documented in section 2.
4. Field devices installed twenty to twenty-five years ago still connect to current servers — Condoplex has suite panels more than 25 years old in service and connected today, on the same platform sold to new buildings this year. This is the only real evidence any vendor can offer about what will happen to equipment bought now, and it is the basis on which Condoplex asks to be judged.

5.1 Where Condoplex should be tested

Two points of candour, because a briefing that only argues one way is not useful to a board.

The ELP1040's built-in card reader is published as HID-compatible 125 kHz — the same unencrypted proximity class that the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario has documented being cloned for twenty to thirty dollars a fob. No building should standardise on it in 2026. Specify encrypted 13.56 MHz credentials and treat the built-in reader as a migration path for the existing fob population, not the end state. That applies to any vendor proposing proximity credentials, Condoplex included.

And the platform runs Linux, which is not the same as being maintenance-free. Linux requires patching and its releases reach end of support like any other operating system. Condoplex is no exception, and the current position is set out below rather than glossed.

Condoplex platform lifecycle	Position
Current release	CPLX Linux 6, supported for the foreseeable future
How updates are delivered on Linux 6	Continuously, as software, without hardware replacement
Previous release	CPLX Linux 5 retires February 2027
What the 5 to 6 migration requires	A head-end upgrade with new controllers — a planned capital item, not a remote push. Buildings on Linux 5 should budget for it now.
What carries across	Field devices. The upgrade is to the head end, not the building.
Dealer readiness	Condoplex is retraining its dealer network ahead of the date.

That is included because the honest version argues better than a claim of permanence. A building on Linux 5 has a dated event ahead of it, with a defined scope, a date published well in advance, a dealer network being retrained to deliver it, and field hardware that carries across. Compare that with a Verex building, whose vendor stopped manufacturing at the end of 2019 and ended support on 31 December 2021 with no path at all. Both are operating-system end-of-life events. Only one was managed.

5.2 What Condoplex commits to

Commitment	Position
Hardware warranty	1 year standard; optional 5-year extended term including software updates, cybersecurity patching and factory support

Commitment	Position
Product support horizon	Supported for as long as spare parts remain obtainable. Stated as it is — a commitment of practice, not a contractual date. Ask every bidder the same question and compare how specific the answers are.
Support hours	08:00–20:00 Eastern, Monday to Friday, with out-of-hours support for urgent issues including weekends
Oldest devices still in service	Suite panels in excess of 25 years old, still operating and connected to current servers
Data location	Backup held on Canadian servers
Mandatory per-suite or per-door fee	None. Recurring services are optional and quoted separately.

6 Cost Over Five and Ten Years

There is no independent published benchmark for multi-tenant entry phone replacement, and any supplier quoting a confident industry average is quoting marketing material. What a board can do instead is impose a common format on every bidder.

Require each quotation broken into hardware, installation, cabling, licences and recurring charges, with five-year and ten-year totals. The recurring line is where comparisons are won and lost: published figures in this market include a per-apartment annual software fee at one vendor and a per-door subscription between roughly \$39 and \$98 per month at another. Over ten years, in a building of any size, that is frequently the largest number in the comparison — and it rarely appears in a headline quotation.

CONDOPLEX COST SCHEDULE FOR THIS BUILDING

Hardware, installation and cabling, and optional recurring services itemised, with five-year and ten-year totals, are provided with the quotation in the same format requested of every other bidder. There is no mandatory per-suite or per-door fee: the extended warranty and remote services are optional and priced separately, so a board can see exactly what is discretionary and what is not.

7 Questions to Put to Every Bidder, in Writing

These are not weighted toward any manufacturer. Asked of every bidder and answered in writing, they surface the differences that matter — and the pattern of who answers cleanly is itself informative.

7.1 Architecture and transport

1. Does this system require a telephone line to reach a resident? If so, what is the plan when the carrier decommissions copper here, and who pays for it?
2. Is the panel a native SIP/VoIP endpoint, or is VoIP delivered through an adapter or a cloud service?
3. Which functions continue to work if the building's internet fails for 24 hours? Answer function by function: door release, credential authentication, resident call, guard call, audit logging.

7.2 Commercial terms

1. What is the total cost over five and ten years, itemised into hardware, installation, cabling, licences and recurring fees, as a written schedule?
2. Is any recurring payment required for the system to keep functioning? What specifically stops working if a payment is missed, and after how long?
3. What do your published terms of service say about suspension, termination, uptime, and the status of installed hardware if the agreement ends? Provide the document, not a summary.
4. If your company is acquired or discontinues this product line, what is the contractual commitment to this building?

7.3 Integration and the building as a whole

1. Is the resident database shared with the suite panels, guard station, elevator control and access control, or does each system hold its own copy?
2. Can a guard answer an entry call with live video from the same screen that shows suite alarms and panic events, without a separate telephone?
3. What audit record is produced automatically, where is it stored, and can it be exported for an insurer or the police?
4. Are you proposing encrypted 13.56 MHz credentials or 125 kHz proximity? If the latter, explain why.

7.4 The vendor and the equipment

1. Where is this equipment manufactured, and does it contain components from manufacturers subject to government security restrictions in Canada or the United States?
2. Which operating-system release will my system run, what is its supported life, how is the upgrade to the next release delivered, and is it included in what I already pay?
3. What is the committed support horizon for this specific model and firmware? In writing.
4. What is the oldest field device from your company still operating on a current server today? This single question separates platform vendors from product vendors.

7.5 Reading the answers

If a bidder...	What it usually means
Answers the outage question function by function, in writing	They have tested it. The best single signal of engineering maturity in the list.
Says "it works offline" without qualifying which functions	Nobody has tested it, or the answer is uncomfortable.
Will not provide a five- and ten-year cost schedule	The recurring cost is material enough that showing it would lose them the bid.
Points to a brochure when asked for terms of service	Read the terms yourself. The brochure is marketing; the terms are the product.

If a bidder...	What it usually means
Cannot name an oldest field device still running on a current server	A product vendor, not a platform vendor. Price the next replacement into this decision.
Tells you your MESH system is discontinued	Ask them to produce the end-of-life notice. There does not appear to be one.
Quotes the entry panel without surveying the access control head-end	They have not understood the building, and the change order is already written.

8 What to Do Next

1. Establish what you actually have. Identify the entry panel and the access control head-end separately — they are often different manufacturers — and record the credential technology in use and whether a telephone line serves the panel.
2. Write to the current owner of your platform for a written support-status letter covering your specific model and firmware. It costs nothing and it is the single most useful document you will obtain.
3. Check what your reserve fund study says. Under section 94 of the Condominium Act, the study must record a remaining life expectancy and replacement cost for this component. If it assigns eight years to a system whose manufacturer stopped supporting it in 2021, the figure is wrong and correcting it is a fiduciary matter, not a purchasing one.
4. Ask every bidder the outage question, function by function, in writing.
5. Require five- and ten-year total cost from every bidder, in the same format, including all recurring charges — and read the terms of service, not the brochure.
6. Stage the work. A competent proposal replaces the lobby panel and head end first and phases the suites, leaving a working supported system at every intermediate point, so the corporation is not forced into a single capital event or a special assessment.

THE OFFER

Condoplex and its authorised dealers will survey the building, document what is installed, distinguish the entry panel from the access control head-end, identify what can be retained, and provide a staged proposal priced over ten years with all recurring costs shown. For buildings on MESH or Verex, that survey includes helping the board request the support-status letter described above — whatever the board decides to do afterwards.

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designed and made in Canada

Every factual claim in this briefing is sourced in full in the technical reference edition, "The Entry Phone Decision," available on request.