

Social Media Guide for Emergency Management



The emergence of social media has created some amazing opportunities to get the message out about emergency preparedness and to interact with residents in your area. This guide will take you through some of the basic steps to effectively utilize this new tool.

There are a wide variety of social media channels out there, but it's best not to spread yourself too thin. To be most effective, focus on one or two that suit your needs. In this guide, we will cover the two most prominent social media channels, Facebook and Twitter.



The Basics

- Set up a page and choose some attractive photos or logos. Then start posting interesting content.
- Once users “like” your page, your posts will show up in their news feeds, just like their friends.
- What should you post about? Important news, hot topics of the day, memorable photos or videos, or just fun stuff. Try to find a balance between your content and content from outside sources.
- Post regularly. Daily is great, but several times a week works if you are consistent.
- To promote the page, link to it on your website and let people know about it as often as possible.

Tips for Better Results

- Keep your posts short and use a casual tone. Remember, your posts will show up in between a family member's latest baby photo and a friend's funny Youtube clip.
- Images and photos get the most clicks, so use as many as possible.
- When referencing other organizations with Facebook pages, be sure to tag them by using the “@” symbol before their name. This will ensure your post shows up on their wall.
- Use the “Insights” feature of Facebook to track which of your posts are most effective. Pay attention to the types of posts that get the most attention, as well as the most popular time of day.
- Ask questions in your posts to prompt responses and comments.
- Use Facebook as your page to “Like” other emergency prep organizations and interact with them.

Sample Posts

- *Link to a seasonal topic:* Much like hurricane season, weddings can be dangerous, bringing severe weather, bridezillas on the loose and in-laws behaving badly. Fortunately, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention compiled some tongue-in-cheek tips on how to survive the "big day." Their advice: build a kit, make a plan and stay informed!
- *Use a memorable photo:*



- *Utilize FEMA resources:* Wondering how to discuss emergency preparedness with your children? Visit ready.gov/kids where the messaging is tailored to children, teens, families as a whole and educators and organizations.
- *Share Ready Georgia posts:* Do you see a post by *Ready Georgia* that you think your fans might want to see too? Just click “Share” and post it on your own timeline.



The Basics

- Twitter has a smaller community than Facebook but it is extremely active. Users typically “tweet” multiple times per day.
- Tweets must be less than 140 characters, so using abbreviations and shortened links (like bit.ly) are a must.
- Because of its immediacy, Twitter is a great way to provide real-time updates during emergency situations.
- Follow as many Twitter users focused on the topic of emergency preparedness as possible, such as @CDCemergency, @ReadydotGov and @GeorgiaEMA, to get the latest info.
- Learn the lingo:
 - User Names(@): If you see an @ in front of a word, that’s a Twitter user’s name. Be sure to mention user names in your tweets, just like tagging on Facebook.
 - Retweet (RT): Twitter users share their favorite tweets by ‘retweeting’ them. To retweet, just type ‘RT’ followed by the user name, and then copy the tweet. Or use the button.
 - Hashtag (#): Placing a # symbol in front of a word creates a hashtag. Searching for hashtags is a great way to follow what’s going on with a particular topic, such as #firesafety or #NPM (for National Preparedness Month).
 - Respond: Starting a tweet with a user name indicates you are directly addressing that user. This is a good way to respond to users and have a conversation.

Tips for Better Results

- Use the “Connect” tab to find out who is following, retweeting and mentioning you. Keep an eye out for opportunities to interact.
- Keep your tweets as short as possible, preferably well under the 140-character limit. This makes it easier for followers to retweet you.
- It’s ok to tweet the same thing multiple times, especially if it’s important. Spread the tweets out over the course of a few days, and tweet at different times of day.
- Do searches for keywords and hashtags to find out what people are saying and to discover new users to follow.
- Programs like [Hootsuite](http://hootsuite) can make managing your Twitter account easier by setting up permanent searches and allowing you to schedule tweets in advance.

Sample Tweets

- *Promoting an event:* Going to be near Chattanooga tomorrow? Join us & [@wdefnews12](#) at the disaster prep fair at Eastgate Town Center!
- *Using a hashtag:* On this day in 1812, Savannah reported a high of 46 degrees. Slightly different this year, so stay hydrated & have a happy [#july4th](#)
- *Retweeting:* RT [@CraigatFEMA](#) 22nd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Are your Preparedness & Response Programs Accessible?
- *Tweeting emergency updates:*
 - What we're following this morning: A big fire at a plastic recycling facility in Summerville, GA.
 - An evacuation has been ordered within 1/4 mile circumference of the facility and 1/2 mile downwind (currently east) of the facility.
 - So far there has been one report of injury involving a firefighter who was on the scene.
 - Be sure to follow our social media pages for more updates to this situation.