

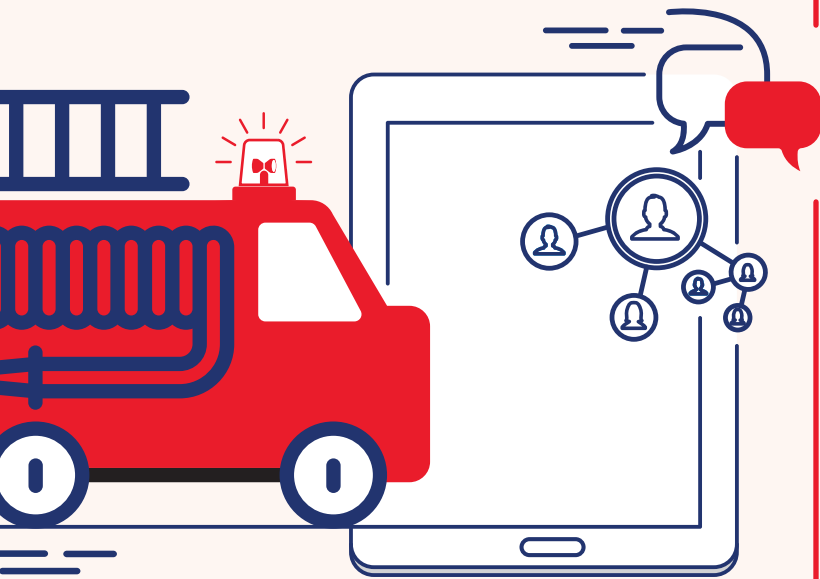


CREATING POWERFUL SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

As the community members you serve spend more of their time online, emergency service organizations must utilize social networks to connect with the community to build awareness and gain support for their work.

Keep These Tips in Mind When Getting Started

- **DECIDE WHICH NETWORK IS BEST** for you by searching for your community residents and leaders, sister agencies, news media, etc. to identify where your community is and how large their networks are.
- **ASSIGN ROLES WITHIN YOUR DEPARTMENT** for managing social media accounts. Be sure to monitor who has access to logins and registered email accounts to protect access to information.
- **HELP YOUR COMMUNITY FIND YOU** by linking your social networks to your other online communications with friendly reminders that the most up to date information can be found on your profile pages.



Define Your Goals

What do you want to accomplish? Here are some examples of how emergency departments successfully use social media:

- **RAISE AWARENESS** about improvements or important updates by providing quick and easy educational information in bite-size content posts.
- **EDUCATE THE PUBLIC** on your role and value in the community.
- **PROMOTE COMMUNITY** events and fundraisers to encourage attendance and engagement.
- **INFORM THE COMMUNITY** about department updates, important announcements, safety tips, etc.
- **GATHER INPUT ONLINE** about relevant community topics.

Have a Social Media Policy

Set expectations and clearly state best practices and behaviors for your online community and employees. Include the following items in your policy:

- **PROPER USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA** by employees and volunteers
- **OWNERSHIP** of user names, digital assets and URLs
- **EXPECTATIONS** for online behavior and interactions
- **COMMUNICATION** tone and messaging to support your goals
- **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY**
- **TERMS TO USE**

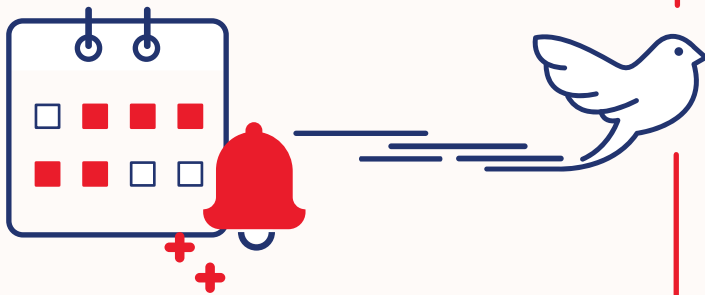


18% OF ADULTS TURN TO SOCIAL MEDIA IF CALLS TO 911 WERE UNSUCCESSFUL

Interact with Your Community

Your community members want to be heard and have access to relevant information. Have a productive, meaningful social media presence by following these best practices:

- **UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE** and what they want.
 - The majority of your community members value important updates that affect their way of life. That includes public safety tips, training announcements, volunteer opportunities, awards to local first responders, and emergency alerts.
- **GROW YOUR NETWORK** by tagging and engaging with other entities that are relevant to your content and audiences' interests.
- **POST INFORMATION THAT INVITES INTERACTION:**
 - Real-time updates on fires, accidents and rescue incidents
 - Department achievements
 - Recruitment for staff or volunteers
 - Educational materials and events

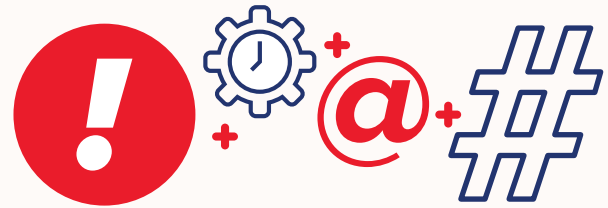


Manage Your Presence

- **BE CONSISTENT** across all posts.
- **BE HUMAN** with your posts and add personality to engage with your community members.
- **CREATE A TIMELINE** of planned content to assist with looking ahead on important updates.
- **BE VISUAL** – Show and tell to motivate your community to take part.

Managing Negative Interactions

In these scenarios, try to move the interaction to a private message or phone call. Always respond in a timely way and with a solutions-oriented approach that shows empathy.



Social Media Can Help in an Emergency

Communicating with your community members during a crisis situation via your social networks can save lives. Here are a few tips on how to use your social networks in an emergency:

- **STOP ALL REGULAR POSTS** to focus on the immediate issue.
- **SHARE HELPFUL INFORMATION** before, during and after the event.
- **POST IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION** to obtain additional details.
- **LINK AND TAG PARTNERS** in the crisis situation, like local police, government officials, healthcare organizations or authorities.
- **PROVIDE TIMELY UPDATES** to communicate that you are aware and committed to sharing details as they arise.
- **SHARE INFORMATION** with other outlets such as news organizations.

74% of people in the US **SPEND MORE TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA** than on any other online activity

THESE TIPS CAN HELP SOCIAL MEDIA BE A RESOURCE TO YOUR SUCCESS.

Looking for more information? VFIS offers additional educational resources here:

[VFIS.COM/SAFETY-CENTRAL](https://www.vfis.com/safety-central)



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