



COVID-19 COMMUNICATIONS MODULE

TOOL 5: CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLIST

Last updated: April 15, 2020

Phase 1

Get in control

Contact all social media managers; alert them that guidelines are forthcoming and instruct them to direct all inquiries to [insert email address of SM lead]

Phase 2

Establish approval process

- Establish a content approval process so that agencies know who to contact for the most reliable sources for information
- Consider which accounts are allowed to retweet or share freely (i.e.) posts coming from the Office of Emergency Management, Police Department, or Mayor's Office
- Develop sample social media posts that direct people to follow specific accounts for more information. For example: "Follow @NYCAAlerts and @NYCGov for official updates on COVID-19"
- Clearly communicate websites social media agencies should be directing people to
- Set approval protocol for agency-specific messages. If an agency wants to share a message that is not covered by the main social accounts, they must know how to get approval in order to prevent conflicting information. Set up a distribution email in advance and activate protocol

Phase 3

Avoid pitfalls

- Remove any pre-scheduled tweets planned until after the crisis has ended; information is likely to change and tweets may be inaccurate, confusing, or inappropriate
- Limit tweets from third-party sources. Set guidelines for which accounts are OK to retweet. Consider whether you will allow social media managers to retweet news reports, federal accounts, and statewide accounts
- Inappropriate tone, sarcasm, humor, all caps, and exclamation points are typically not appropriate for emergency situations. Photos, images, and graphics used should reflect the gravity of the situation

Phase 4

Be active and coordinated across city social media channel

Make sure social media is aligned with the city's website. This includes making sure social sharing graphics are updated and that the city's website is updated with the relevant information.

Keep your social media active:

- Live stream press conferences; make sure press conferences consistently promote the mayor's social media handle and website
- Upload press conferences to YouTube channels so they are easy to find and embed them on the city's website. Consider other live streaming platforms for press conferences including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. If live tweeting press conferences, produce easy-to-follow graphics to publish during the broadcast
- Have the Mayor record video messages direct-to-camera outside of press conferences. This can be done on a smartphone, make sure all videos have subtitles
- Put experts like the Health Department Commissioner, Transportation Commissioner, or Police Chief on social media; Use video interviews, written Q&As, photo essays, quote graphics, and other creative ways to highlight that they are a go-to source for accurate information
- Create a repository of social media assets, logos, and videos or graphics that have been produced. Use a DropBox or Google Drive. Then share the media hub with all agencies for their use

Phase 5

Monitor closely

- Social media listening should use keywords to identify residents concerns with the city's website, services, conflicting information, or other issues
- Team members should rotate being on-call for social listening duties
- Develop an incident report workflow to flag issues
- Surface posts from across social media platforms, also look in your own posts' comments
- If your agency does not have access to a social media listening platform, check with the Mayor's communications office and other agencies to see what can be done