

# DURING A CRISIS: SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY GUIDELINES

*Use this checklist during a crisis to ensure you don't miss a step while executing your social media strategy.*

During a crisis, social media can be an effective tool for facilitating communications quickly and directly with audiences. When a crisis occurs, stay calm and attentive. Do your best not to increase the panic with misinformation or delay in informing the public. Use this checklist and your social media strategy to build credibility for your organization while meeting the needs of the public during the crisis.

1. Determine if the situation meets the predetermined criteria of a crisis that requires addressing through social media. Consider:
  - a. What does my team know?
  - b. What audience(s) need to know?
  - c. Why do they need to know?
  - d. Is there anyone who doesn't need to know?
  - e. Is social media the most effective tool for communicating the information to them?
2. Establish control.
  - a. Pause any scheduled posts across all platforms so as not to appear insensitive.
  - b. Actively monitor and listen to what people are saying and asking.
  - c. Ensure the [crisis management team](#) knows their roles and is in alignment. This specifically includes coordinating information and

receiving updates, creating content for new posts, approving or obtaining approvals from higher authorities as necessary and monitoring social media.

- d. Determine which communication channels are best and available to use as communication channels to distribute information to the affected audiences.
3. Execute crisis communication plan.
    - a. Prepare responses based on command messaging and release them when appropriate.
    - b. Publish the initial release on the official website for reporters and key stakeholders, so they can find the comprehensive story.
    - c. Draft a post that acknowledges the event and directs your audience to where they can find updates (e.g., your website).
    - d. Complete a quality check of each post for tone, grammar, content and adherence to [guidelines for release](#) and DoD policy before posting to the appropriate platform(s).
    - e. Maintain your website with timestamped updates above the initial release.
  4. Remember who's listening. Continue asking:
    - a. What does my team know?
    - b. What audience(s) need to know?
    - c. Why do they need to know?
    - d. Is there anyone who doesn't need to know?
    - e. Is social media the most effective tool for communicating the information to them?