Social Media Tips During a Crisis

Communicating through multiple channels during a crisis is very important. More and more, citizens are turning to social media to get updates from their government. Below are important tips to consider when using social media to communicate during uncertain times.

1. **Create a hashtag unique to your locality during the crisis.** Hashtags allow social media users to easily follow information as it’s being released. Be sure to use the hashtag each time you post about the crisis.

2. **Post updates across all social media platforms.** While the length of your update may need to vary from platform to platform, each post should, in general, communicate the same information.

3. **Post regularly.** A lag in posts could create questions for an anxious community. Even if you do not have new details, post a reminder to information released earlier in the day.

4. **Be prepared to post at any time.** During a crisis, information can come at any hour. Be prepared to post at night and on weekends to keep the community as up-to-date as possible.

5. **Coordinate posts.** During a crisis, information being released may affect schools, hospitals, etc. It’s important to coordinate the language of those messages with all parties involved. This helps provide one message across the social platforms. Also, tag organizations or entities involved in the announcement when posting.

6. **Create crisis graphics to use for each post.** Each social media post should include some type of graphic. This helps grab the attention of users as they’re scrolling through their timeline. Each graphic should have the same branding with only the words (alert, update, closures, etc.) changing.

7. **Pause scheduled posts.** Many local governments schedule posts ahead of time related to various events happening in the community. Check all scheduled posts and pause any that are not related to the crisis.

8. **Live-stream press conferences.** Many local governments are holding press conferences to provide updates to the community. Most social media platforms allow for live broadcasts. It’s also important to have a sign language interpreter available at the press conference for the hearing impaired.

9. **Monitor comments and questions.** Many community residents will have questions related to the crisis. It’s important to monitor and respond to inquiries in a timely manner. This also provides local governments an opportunity to correct the spread of misinformation in real time.