

How to Use Social Media in VERT Activations

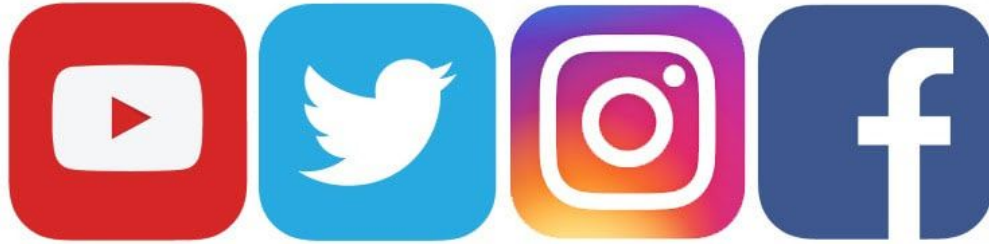


What is social media?

Social media is a website or application that is used to share information via virtual networks. These include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc.

How VERT can use social media for Virtual Reconnaissance?

Social media is used as one of many methods to communicate within a community in a timely manner. VERT encourages members to find information regarding disaster updates, utility shortages/outages, infrastructure damage, first response mobility, shelter locations, etc. using only credible social media accounts. VERT members should NEVER use information from personal social media accounts to contribute to reconnaissance work.



Who to follow during natural disasters and what to expect from them?

Government Agencies: These sources share updates on disasters, shelter locations, road/airport closures, contact information, and other helpful information.

Government Agency	Social Media Accounts
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Website: https://www.fema.gov Twitter account: https://twitter.com/fema or @fema YouTube account: https://www.youtube.com/user/FEMA Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/fema/ or @fema
United States Geological Survey (USGS)	Website: https://www.usgs.gov Twitter account: https://twitter.com/USGS or @USGS YouTube account: https://www.youtube.com/user/usgs Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/usgs/ or @usgs
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)	Website: https://www.noaa.gov/ Twitter account: https://twitter.com/NOAA or @NOAA YouTube account: https://www.youtube.com/user/noaa Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/noaa/ or @noaa
<p>* Social media accounts for the following agencies and departments shall be found accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Emergency Management Agencies (state, county, city) • Local Department of Transportation (DOT) (state, city) • Local Department of Education/school districts 	



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Utility Providers: These accounts are usually used to communicate with customers regarding areas of outages, resource restrictions, and updates regarding utility restoration.

- Water Resources Department
- Power Companies (electric, gas, etc.)

First Responders: Typical accounts operated by first response teams are used to communicate with the community, determine response priorities, and mobilizing response teams. These local agencies can be both state and city.

- Local Police Department
- Local Fire Department
- Local Hospital Facility

Relief Organizations: Information regarding shelter location, food and water availability, etc. are often shared from these accounts.

Relief Organization	Social Media Accounts
American Red Cross	Website: https://www.redcross.org Twitter account: https://twitter.com/RedCross or @RedCross YouTube account: https://www.youtube.com/user/AmRedCross Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/americanredcross or @americanredcross



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International Engineering Organizations: These organizations typically post information with regards to post-disaster conditions and people going into the field

International Engineering Organization	Social Media Accounts
Build Change	Website: https://www.buildchange.org/ Twitter account: https://twitter.com/buildchange or @BuildChange YouTube account: https://www.youtube.com/user/BuildChange Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/buildchangeintl or @buildchangeintl
GeoHazards International	Website: https://www.geohaz.org/ Twitter account: https://twitter.com/geosafety or @geosafety YouTube account: https://www.youtube.com/user/GeoHazInternational
National Council of Structural Engineers Associations (NCSEA)	Website: http://www.ncsea.com/ Twitter account: https://twitter.com/ncsea or @NCSEA
National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST)	Website: https://www.nist.gov/ Twitter account: https://twitter.com/usnistgov or @usnistgov YouTube account: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeItOpbih_hBrNSA5cRZyw Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/usnistgov or @usnistgov
National Home Education Research Institute/ DesignSafe	Website: https://www.nheri.org/ Twitter account: https://twitter.com/nheri2010 or @nheri YouTube account: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCMsEU-FmXaZfpLoSnZURVA/featured
National Science Foundation (NSF)/NHERI RAPID Center	Website: https://www.nsf.gov/ Twitter account: https://twitter.com/NSF or @NSF YouTube account: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRuCgmzhczsm89jzPtN2Wuw Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/nsfgov or @nsfgov
Dr. Lucy Jones	Website: http://drlucyjones.com/ Twitter account: https://twitter.com/drlucyjones or @drlucyjones



Accuracy Checklist provided by Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries

Social media can provide instant news faster than traditional news outlets or sources and can be a great wealth of information, but there is also an ever increasing need to verify and determine accuracy of this information. Here are some items to consider that can help determine authenticity:

- Location of the source - are they in the place they are tweeting or posting about?
- Network - who is in their network and who follows them? Do I know this account?
- Content - Can the information be corroborated from other sources?
- Contextual updates - Do they usually post or tweet on this topic? If so, what did past or updated posts say? Do they fill in more details?
- Age - What is the age of the account in question? Be wary of recently created accounts.
- Reliability - Is the source of information reliable?

References:

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/social-media>
- <https://guides.library.jhu.edu/evaluate/social-media>
- Haddow, George D., and Kim S. Haddow. *Disaster Communications in a Changing Media World*. Elsevier, 2014.