



facebook



# Prepare & Respond

Tips for first responders and government agencies to get the most out of Facebook before, during and after disasters

Help your community with  
**READINESS**

Support  
**RESPONSE  
AND RELIEF**  
initiatives

Engage in  
ongoing  
**RECOVERY**  
efforts

Help build  
community  
**RESILIENCE**

facebook

*“Standard advice about preparing for disasters focuses on building shelters and stockpiling things, such as food, water and batteries. But resilience – the ability to recover from shocks, including natural disasters – comes from our connections to others, and not from physical infrastructure or disaster kits.”*

– **Daniel Aldrich,**

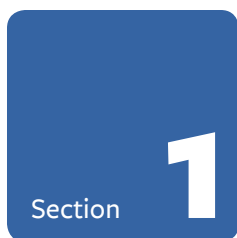
Director, Security and Resilience Studies Programme,  
Northeastern University, USA

In times of crisis, connecting and building community is more important than ever. Facebook can foster the social connections that help communities prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. Organisations, governments and individuals turn to Facebook to communicate with their communities, whether to lead and rally friends and neighbours around disaster-related events, gather and disseminate timely and reliable information from diverse sources or share important updates from first responders. This guide aims to share useful tips and examples of best practices to help you most effectively use Facebook to build community resilience before, during and after a disaster.

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For more information, or to share your own tips and success stories, find us on Facebook at **[facebook.com/disaster](https://www.facebook.com/disaster)**

# How to use Facebook before, during and after disasters

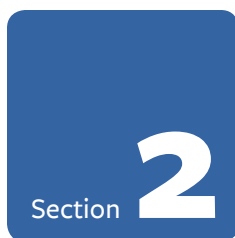


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Tips for response and relief organisations

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Facebook Crisis Response Products

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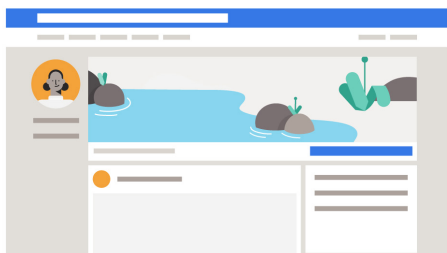


# Tips for first responders and government agencies

Knowing how to best use Facebook can allow first responders and government agencies to engage the public as part of their team, and to quickly connect the community to help people stay safe and informed, fostering community resilience in the wake of a disaster.

## Core features

## Pages



The different features of Facebook Pages, such as call-to-action buttons, photos and videos, Live and Notes, allow your agency to tell robust stories and have engaging and enduring interactions with the people you serve.

### Tips for creating an engaging Page:

- Choose a cover photo that shows how your agency works to serve and protect your community
- Choose a profile picture that easily identifies your agency to those who know you and those who don't
- Use the About section to outline your agency's mission, vision and values
- Post frequently with relevant and timely information, and respond to questions in comments
- Like and follow related and similar Facebook Pages, including community organisations, community leaders and other agencies, and share relevant posts, photos, videos and links with your followers
- Create "evergreen" content, such as disaster preparedness tips or useful contact numbers that can be easily and reliably accessed

## Core features

## Page posts



Page Posts are the primary way for your agency to communicate with people who follow your Facebook Page.

### Use posts:

- To increase community engagement
- To promote and support emergency preparedness and awareness activities
- To update people on the status of a particular event, including the actions of first responders on the ground
- To inform people of how to access relief and aid

### Before

Create a Page posting strategy designed to help keep people engaged and informed. For example, post timely preparedness tips related to potential disaster events (such as impending severe weather).

### During

Timing is crucial; post regularly with photos and videos, and when appropriate, target posts to people in specific locations. Stay connected with your followers by going live to share timely information, and by frequently responding to questions and feedback in the comments on your posts. You can also pin a post to the top of your Page to highlight emergency information.

### After

Post clear information about where community members can find official information, receive aid or help in the community's recovery efforts. Invite people to share any information they have about citizen-led relief and recovery efforts.



## Core features

## Photos and videos



Photos and videos can help “put a face” on your agency, make your updates more interesting and accessible, and are great for sharing authentic and engaging content.

### Use photos and videos:

- To increase the community’s understanding of first responders and their roles and duties
- To help communicate the severity of emergency situations
- To demonstrate ways people can prepare for, respond to and/or recover from a disaster

### Before

Photos help “put a face” on your agency, which can reinforce and increase your connection with the public. Routinely posting them can help you build and engage your audience, making you a more trusted resource.

### During

As a disaster develops, post photos and videos to help tell the story about what’s happening and where. Share Facebook photos and videos from other sources, such as news outlets, other response agencies and organisations, and citizens to help tell a more robust story of unfolding events.

### After

Use photos to let the public know what first responders are doing to help communities recover and rebuild after a disaster.

**Learn more:** [facebook.com/help/photos/uploading](https://facebook.com/help/photos/uploading)

## Core features

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# Live



In the crucial moments before and during a disaster when accurate and effective communication is needed, broadcast to your followers in real time using Live. Live allows you to interact with people using live streaming video from your Page. Direct people to useful information by letting your audience know when you'll be going live with a written post beforehand. Access this feature from the Facebook Pages Manager app.

### Use Live:

- To introduce new staff or initiatives
- To share official emergency guidance directly with your followers
- To broadcast your next press conference or announcement to reach a larger audience

### Before

Share tips for disaster preparedness, using visuals in your Live broadcast to demonstrate suggested supplies, maps or actions to take to stay safe.

### During

Go Live to document disaster conditions, share important information and amplify recommendations from emergency professionals.

### After

Interview volunteers involved with relief efforts, document rebuilding efforts and raise funds in real time from your viewers.



## Core features

# Groups



Use Facebook Groups to coordinate and organise different groups of people. You can use Groups to share updates with select audiences or to collaborate on projects. Groups can be open, closed or secret, depending on how private you want a particular group to be.

## Use Groups:

- To create a dedicated communication channel for family members of first responders
- For internal coordination among shifts and crews
- To organise volunteers and tasks, such as a team to manage and monitor your agency's different social media channels
- To communicate directly with strategic partners and agencies

## Before

Create a Facebook group around a defined outcome or goal, such as organising or coordinating community activities, and invite people to join it.

## During

Use Groups to quickly relay information to relevant people responsible for specific tasks or activities. You can also share documents and files for collaboration.

## After

Create and maintain Groups focused on particular concerns and needs that may spring up in the aftermath of a disaster event.

## Core features

## Events



Facebook Events are a great way to bring people together – either on Facebook or in person – before, during or after a disaster. When people accept an invitation, they'll be able to participate in a conversation on the Event page and will receive a reminder notification from Facebook.

### Use Events:

- To bring your community together – on Facebook or in person – for a common goal
- To raise awareness for a particular disaster
- To create and promote donation and volunteer opportunities
- To organise community emergency response teams, first aid and CPR training

### Before

Use Facebook Events to schedule and promote awareness and preparedness activities.

### During

If your agency is outside of an area affected by a disaster, it can immediately offer help by hosting Facebook Events, such as a food or clothing collection, to bring relief to communities affected by the disaster.

### After

Use Facebook Events to organise and coordinate relief and recovery teams.

## Other helpful features

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# Hashtags



Hashtags, indicated by a “#” in front of a word or phrase, categorize your posts by keywords that connect similar content. This makes your post easily found when people are searching for a particular topic. When something newsworthy happens, or if you’re posting timely and informative content, use the main hashtag that the community is using to share information about the topic and pair it with a call-to-action button to activate supporters.

### Use hashtags:

- So that updates on an evolving emergency event are searchable
- To potentially expand the audience for your posts
- To lead or join a broader conversation about a particular disaster or topic

**Learn more:** [facebook.com/help/hashtags](https://facebook.com/help/hashtags)

# Notes



Notes offer a way to communicate longer content, similar in length to a news article or blog post, to the public and those who follow your agency. When something newsworthy happens, or if you’re posting timely and informative content, use the main hashtag that the community is using to share information about the topic.

### Use Notes:

- To explain and highlight severe weather warnings
- To provide in-depth details about preparedness activities
- For long-form updates about recent emergency events

**Learn more:** [facebook.com/help/notes](https://facebook.com/help/notes)

## Other helpful features

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### Follow other Pages



Follow and Like similar Pages to help you build important connections and alliances with other agencies and community leaders. It can also help people connected to those Pages to more easily find yours.

**Learn more:** [facebook.com/help/follow](https://facebook.com/help/follow)

### Tagging



Tagging another Page creates a link to that Page from within your post. Tagging other credible information sources can increase the reach of your content, help add credibility to your posts and allow your organisation's Facebook followers to discover and access new resources on Facebook. To tag a Page, type the "@" symbol, start typing its name; then pick the Page you want from the drop-down menu.

**Learn more:** [facebook.com/help/tagging](https://facebook.com/help/tagging)

### Messenger for Pages



Pages can use Messenger, enabling your agency to send and receive direct communication to and from people on Facebook. Messenger is a great way for people to communicate with you when they don't know how else to reach your agency, or when phone lines are down, but Internet access is uninterrupted. You can create Instant reply messages to provide people with basic information about your organisation or to thank them for contacting you. If you often receive the same questions, you can create a saved reply, which is a message template you can create, save and reuse when you respond to messages as your Page.

#### Use Messages:

- To enable your community another direct communication channel to your agency
- To provide direct support to people in the community looking for help or answers
- To receive and share time-sensitive information

**Learn more:** [developers.facebook.com/docs/messenger-platform](https://developers.facebook.com/docs/messenger-platform)

# Key takeaways

## First responders and government agencies

**1**

Create a Page, managed by agency staff and/or volunteers, to facilitate a dialogue between your agency and the public. Dialogue will help you keep the public informed and quickly address any misinformation.

**2**

Post regular updates so that your Page becomes a trusted resource during a disaster.

**3**

Share photos and videos to help you better communicate important information and to make your posts more engaging. Or go Live to interact with your followers in real time.

**4**

Organise a volunteer social media staff to help manage your agency's Facebook presence, especially during a disaster when people are turning to your Page for information and answers.

**5**

Include hashtags in your posts to join the broader conversation happening on Facebook, and to make your content easily searchable.

**6**

Tag other organisations you are working with in your posts.

**7**

Use Facebook to learn what's going on in your community and re-share any content your agency thinks might be helpful.

**8**

Allow followers to message your Page for quick assistance and answers to time-sensitive questions.

**9**

Turn to Messenger as a meaningful and efficient communication channel when phone lines are down.

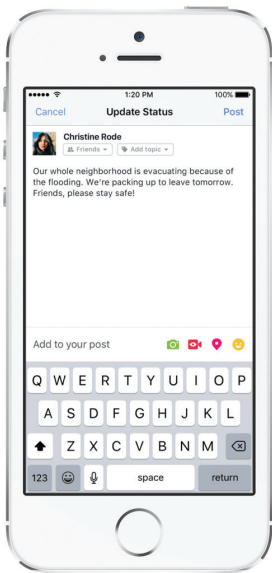


# Facebook crisis response products

In times of crisis, connecting and building communities is more important than ever. A growing body of research shows that the strength of communities affected by disaster is a determining factor in how quickly and effectively they recover.

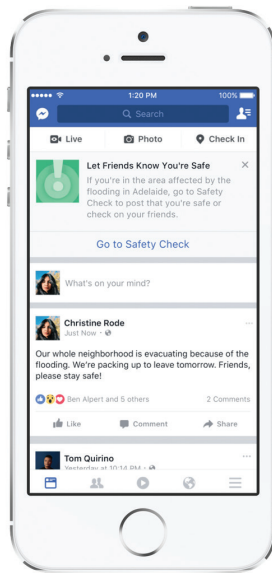
# Safety Check

At Facebook, we are creating the social infrastructure to help communities connect during and after a disaster. We know people turn to Facebook to check on loved ones and to get updates, and communication is critical in these moments. We built Safety Check to make it easy for people to connect with friends and families when it matters most. Communities help each other recover from a disaster, so we've also designed Community Help as a feature that lets people ask for and offer help from within Safety Check.



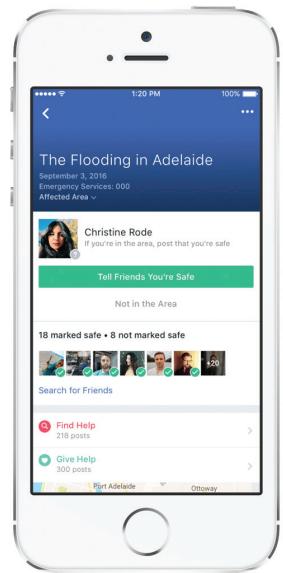
## People activate Safety Check

If enough people in an affected area post about an incident, Safety Check is activated.



## Safety Check

People in the affected area are prompted to go to Safety Check to let friends know they're safe.

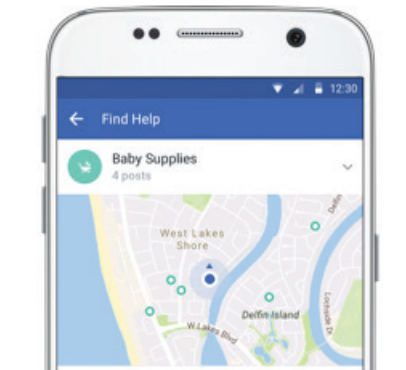
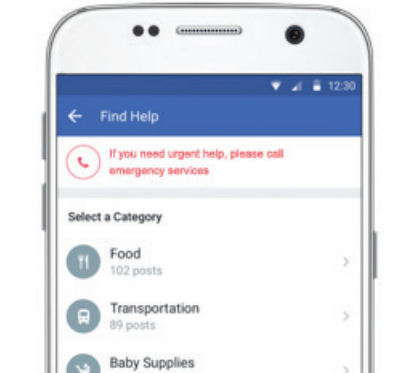
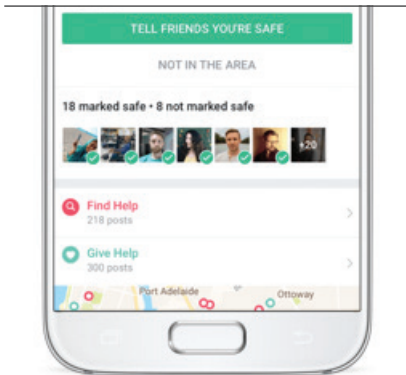


## Ask if friends are safe

People can also see which friends have marked themselves safe, invite more friends to Safety Check, and find and give help.



# How to use Safety Check and Community Help



When Safety Check is activated for a major disaster, you can help spread the word. The best way to alert your community that Safety Check has been activated is to post on your Page or in your group with a link to the Safety Check page. In your post, you can encourage people to mark themselves safe.

With Community Help, you can then ask for or offer help to your community, with items such as food and water, clothing, transport or shelter. Posts can be searched by category and location, and you can message others directly, making it easier for people to find the help they need from neighbours and friends.

We hope that tools like Safety Check and Community Help enable communities to connect and recover from disaster, building resilience.

**Learn more:** [facebook.com/about/safetycheck](https://facebook.com/about/safetycheck)

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[facebook.com/disaster](https://facebook.com/disaster)

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