



April 16, 2018  
DR-4337-FL NR 172  
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# News Release

## Social Media and Emergency Preparedness

**ORLANDO, Fla.** – Social media plays an increasing role in how people communicate. Whether in the middle of a disaster or in everyday situations, more are exchanging information by using the Internet, texting, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube or using apps such as WhatsApp and Snapchat.

People with smart phones can download FEMA’s mobile app to receive weather alerts, safety reminders and preparedness tips, disaster resources including open shelters and to submit disaster photos to help first responders. Learn more online at [fema.gov/mobile-app](http://fema.gov/mobile-app).

Emergency management officials are aware of social media trends and are adapting to the new communications outlets in order to reach a larger audience of all ages.

Many local emergency managers in Florida provide social media outlets for community members to look for information during disaster response and recovery phases.

FEMA has a [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FEMA) page at [www.facebook.com/FEMA](http://www.facebook.com/FEMA) and an Instagram page at [www.instagram.com/FEMA](http://www.instagram.com/FEMA). Also, FEMA Region IV—which includes Florida—has a [Twitter](https://twitter.com/femaregion4) account at [twitter.com/femaregion4](https://twitter.com/femaregion4) where important information is posted. In times of crisis, they help share critical information with Twitter alerts.

When the president declares a major disaster, FEMA’s deployed personnel include digital communications specialists who monitor social media on a daily basis, picking up relevant references to FEMA and the current disaster. The digital team shares posts from survivors with experts who can help answer questions and clarify concerns. The team also posts information to FEMA’s Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Virtual Operations Support Teams are a global effort to make use of new communication technologies and social media tools in emergency management and disaster recovery. VOST members can lend support via the Internet to those on-site who may otherwise be overwhelmed by the volume of data generated during a disaster. Learn more online at [vosg.us](http://vosg.us).

Florida State University in Tallahassee has a VOST project, part of the FSU Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program. **It supports** state and local governments, and provides necessary information to emergency managers and the general public via social media. Learn more online at [fsuvost.com](http://fsuvost.com).

Also, their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/fsu.vost](http://www.facebook.com/fsu.vost) and Twitter account at [twitter.com/cdrp\\_fsu](https://twitter.com/cdrp_fsu) provide updates during disasters.

For more recovery information, visit [www.FEMA.gov/IrmaFL](http://www.FEMA.gov/IrmaFL), or follow us [@FEMARegion4](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion4) on Twitter and on [FEMA's Facebook page](#).

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*FEMA's mission: Helping people before, during and after disasters.*

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.*

*FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.*

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