

# WHAT TO DO DURING AN EMERGENCY: Social Media 101



Whether in preparation for, in response to, or recovery from an emergency event, conversations are occurring on social media networks. We can look at social media as a means (one of many) by which emergency managers can provide service to the public, achieving a successful mutual outcome of protecting the public and mitigating the impact of disasters. The participation in social media is the bridge between the means and the end when the emergency management community and the public work together. We can all play a role in using social media to seek emergency information and share it to help our family, friends, neighbors, work colleagues and communities. Please note that social media should be used in addition to SMS messages, radio, TV, internet, newspapers and online emergency information.

## Benefits

- Immediate, real-time engagement
- Increase organization visibility
- Low cost
- Engage public as a critical partner in emergency response
- Reduce call volume
- Achieve outcomes

## Goals

- Inform, engage, connect, collaborate, instruct and impact
- Rapid response and crisis communication
- Connect stakeholders to your agency/organization and to other stakeholders
- Communicate more effectively and directly with stakeholders
- Build situational awareness
- Convey integrity and dependability

## Tools

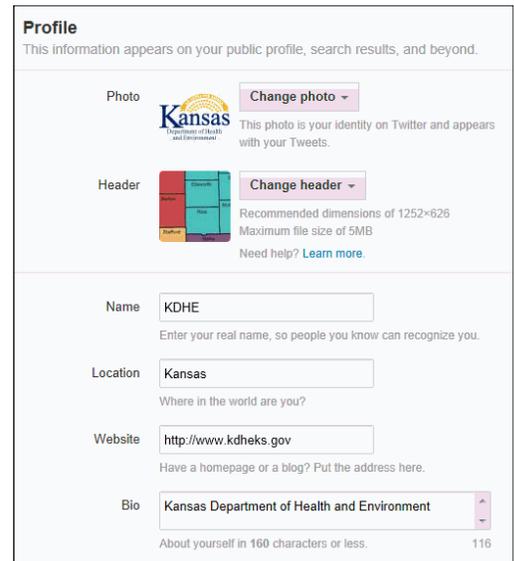
### Smartphone Apps

- Look for and download [Smartphone Apps](#) that provide real time, location based warning messages

Create an Account at <https://twitter.com/signup>

### Profile Information—Keep it concise

- Photo: Your agency logo
- Header: Background photo related to your agency
- Name: Can be official name or an acronym
- Location: Use regional information specific to your agency (i.e. local health departments may put Johnson County, KS)
- Bio: If using acronym for Twitter name, be sure to put your official name in this section. You may also include mission statements and #hashtags here
- Search for and follow other emergency agencies and media



**Profile**  
This information appears on your public profile, search results, and beyond.

**Photo**   This photo is your identity on Twitter and appears with your Tweets.

**Header**   Recommended dimensions of 1252x626  
Maximum file size of 5MB  
Need help? [Learn more.](#)

**Name**   
Enter your real name, so people you know can recognize you.

**Location**   
Where in the world are you?

**Website**   
Have a homepage or a blog? Put the address here.

**Bio**   
About yourself in 160 characters or less. 116

### Tweets

Emergency Agencies are using Twitter to issue warning and emergency information in real time using tweets. Tweets are composed of 140 characters or less. Keep it concise and use abbreviations, symbols and shorthand whenever possible.



**Retweet (RT)**

- Re-post someone else’s tweet to quickly share information about an emergency event
- Watch for official messages from emergency agencies and the media that can be retweeted
- 140 character max, but leave room for RTs and shoot for 120 characters
- Beware – information may not be correct or rumor (which spreads quickly online)



**#Hashtags**

Hashtags are used to create discussion forums on a certain topic using keywords following a hash symbol (or pound sign). Using a hashtag essentially creates a searchable hyperlink for that word or phrase, with no spaces in the tagged phrase.

- During an emergency, agencies, the media and the public use hashtags (i.e. #flood #tornado)
- When a hashtag is used, anyone searching that topic can be linked in to the discussion
- Following a hashtag gives you instant information on that emergency
- Sometimes more than one hashtag is used (i.e. #ksflood, #kstornado)
- Search a hashtag before using it for uniqueness and associations

**@Reply and Mentions**

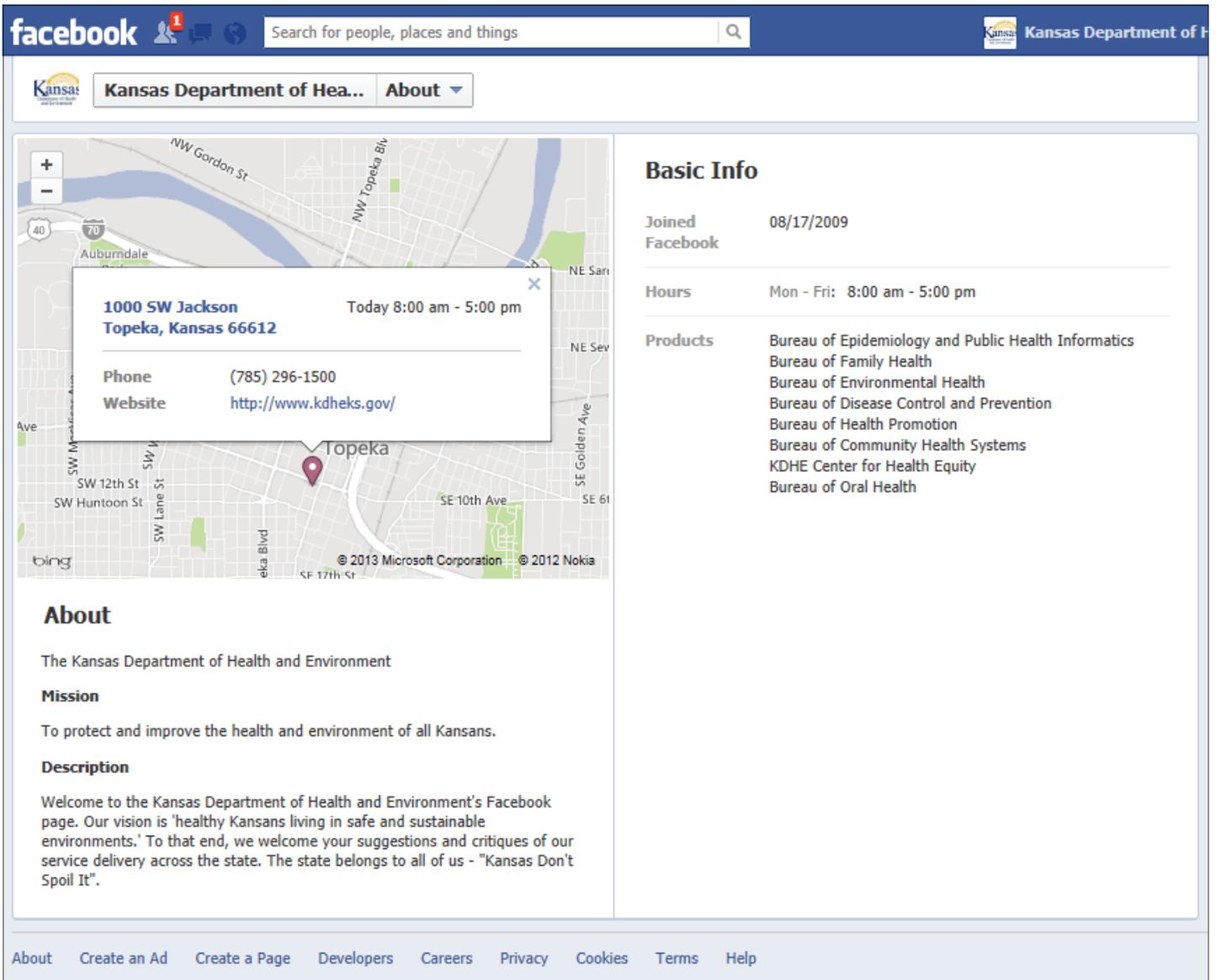
- Expanding a tweet will give you the option to Reply or Retweet. Replying to a tweet is great for communicating information or answering questions about an emergency event.
- A mention is any tweet that contains “@username”. See example at left. Mentions are great ways to recognize a person or an agency or begin a conversation.



Create a Facebook Page [www.facebook.com/pages/create.php](http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php)

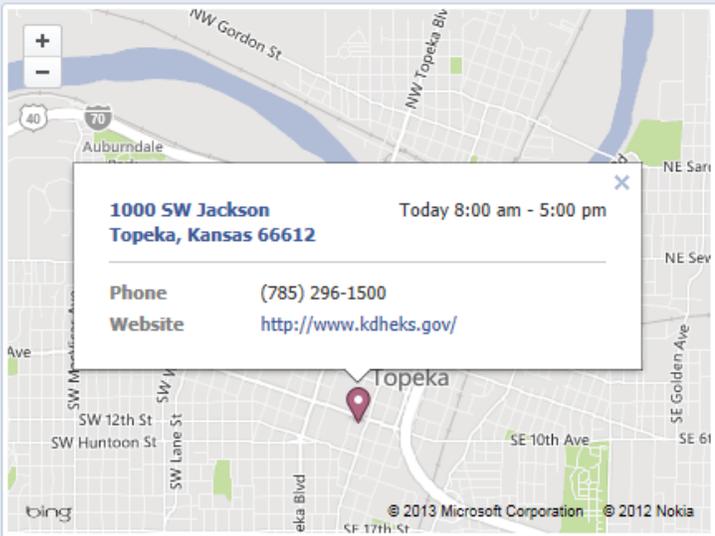
### Profile Information

- Photo: Your agency logo
- Cover Photo: Background photo related to your agency
- Username: Use official name
- Category, Location, Hours, Description, Mission, Phone, Website
- Search for and like other emergency agencies and media



**facebook**    Search for people, places and things   **Kansas Department of Health and Environment**

**Kansas Department of Health and Environment** About ▾



**1000 SW Jackson** Today 8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
**Topeka, Kansas 66612**

**Phone** (785) 296-1500  
**Website** <http://www.kdheks.gov/>

### Basic Info

**Joined Facebook** 08/17/2009

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**Hours** Mon - Fri: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

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**Products**

- Bureau of Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics
- Bureau of Family Health
- Bureau of Environmental Health
- Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention
- Bureau of Health Promotion
- Bureau of Community Health Systems
- KDHE Center for Health Equity
- Bureau of Oral Health

### About

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment

#### Mission

To protect and improve the health and environment of all Kansans.

#### Description

Welcome to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Facebook page. Our vision is 'healthy Kansans living in safe and sustainable environments.' To that end, we welcome your suggestions and critiques of our service delivery across the state. The state belongs to all of us - "Kansas Don't Spoil It".

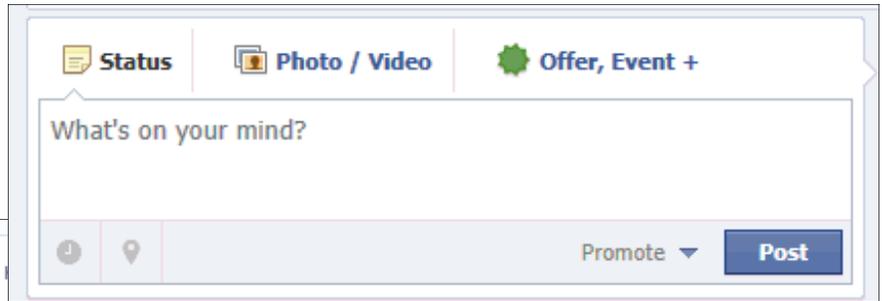
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### Status Update

Emergency Agencies are using Facebook to issue warning and emergency information in real time. Use Facebook to keep the phone lines free for emergency services. Post photos and timely information of events to your timeline.

### Comment

Commenting on a post is a great way to answer questions, relay important updates and communicate during an emergency event.



### News Feed

This is located as the center column of your homepage. It is an updating list of stories from people and pages that you are connected with on Facebook. It includes status updates, photos, links, likes, etc. This is where you'll find real-time information to share with your friends.

### Share

Update your status and share others' photos, videos, links and content about an emergency event. Things you share will appear as posts on your timeline.

### Like

- Like the pages of key agencies in your area to ensure you receive their messages and encourage likes for your page too.
- Encourage friends to like and share timely information. Liking a post will send it to the top of new feeds. The more likes you have on a status update, the more people will see your message in an emergency event.

## **OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **YouTube**

- Find and watch emergency services YouTube video updates on the emergency
- Favorite them to easily rewatch
- YouTube links can also be shared on Facebook and Twitter

### **Real Time Community Maps**

- Make sure you have GPS enabled on your mobile phone to ensure you receive messages for emergencies that may put you in danger wherever you are
- Real-time maps also provide the best route to your destination which is critical during an emergency event

## **MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA**

Monitor your social media sites for activity, comments and replies. Monitor others for information related to your agency or an emergency event. Effective social media monitoring can inform response decisions and influence plans for its strategic use.

Sites like Hootsuite and Tweetdeck filter and screen messages from Twitter, Facebook and several social media sites which allows you to look for trends and correct incorrect communication by replying or commenting on their status updates. These can also be used as broadcasting tools.

## **RESOURCES**

Social Media in Emergency Management course:

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=is-42>

Twitter for Public Health Webcast:

<http://onlinevideosevice.com/clients/npin/danya0213/stream.aspx>

Tweak-the-Tweet:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLz4h8XI0Uw>

[http://epic.cs.colorado.edu/?page\\_id=11](http://epic.cs.colorado.edu/?page_id=11)