Social Media Tips and Resources

For Communicating Road Safety Initiatives to Your Residents

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Your agency has good work to share. Social media gives you a way to explain what is happening, why it matters, and how residents can stay informed. These tips and resources will help you get started, even if you do not have a dedicated communications professional.

Start with a simple plan

- Identify who you need to reach and what you want them to know or do. A neighborhood paving update and a town-wide safety campaign may need different approaches.
- Choose someone to gather information, someone to approve it, and someone to post and check comments. Have a backup so updates continue when staff is out.
- Keep a simple calendar with the topic, audience, posting date, platform, photo or graphic, and staff person responsible. Include project milestones and seasonal safety reminders.
- Use your website as the home for complete project information. Share the same core facts through social media, email, local news, meetings, and notices in town buildings.

Give residents the information they need

Lead with the most useful information. Include what is happening, where, when, why, and what residents need to do. Explain the safety benefit in plain language and give a contact or link for questions.

- Keep posts short, use familiar words, and spell out acronyms. Ask someone outside your department to read the message before you post.
- Use your agency name, logo, and a consistent look so residents recognize official information. Keep dates, locations, and instructions consistent across platforms.
- Tell residents when they can expect another update. Post changes to schedules or access as soon as they are confirmed and follow up when the work is complete.

Sample project update

New crosswalk markings are coming to [location] to make the crossing more visible to drivers. Crews will be working [date and time], weather permitting. Please slow down and follow posted directions in the work area. Visit [project link] for details. Questions? Contact [agency contact].

Choose the Platforms That Fit Your Community

Facebook remains a strong starting point for reaching residents and may be your agency's largest social media audience. LinkedIn is gaining momentum for professional information and connections. Use more than one platform when you have the staff time to keep each account current and respond to questions.

National platform use does not tell you how many residents will see your posts. Review your own results and ask residents where they get town information. YouTube and Facebook are widely used nationally, with YouTube reaching the larger share of adults in Pew Research Center's 2025 survey.

Keep the facts the same, but adjust the length and visuals for each platform. Continue outreach beyond social media so residents who don't use these accounts still receive important information.

Platform or tool	Primary use for a local agency
Facebook	Resident updates, road work notices, safety campaigns, public meetings, and community news. Share useful information from local partners and link to full details.
Instagram	Photos and short videos that show work in the community. Good for demonstrations, progress photos, and visual safety reminders, including outreach to younger residents.
LinkedIn	Professional updates, agency accomplishments, partnerships, training, and recruitment. Useful for connecting with colleagues and stakeholders who may also share your information.
YouTube	A video library for recorded presentations, project explanations, demonstrations, and safety tips. Use clear titles, descriptions, thumbnails, and reviewed captions.
X	Brief and timely updates, agency announcements, and media outreach, where your community already uses it. Point readers to the official source for details.
TikTok	Short videos that explain a topic or demonstrate a safety message. Consider it where your audience uses it and your agency permits and supports its use.
Flickr	Organized photo albums for projects, events, and agency activities. Use it as a photo library and share album links when helpful.
Website or blog	Complete project information, frequently asked questions, longer articles, contacts, and archived updates. WordPress is one option for publishing a website or blog.

Take Photos That Help Tell Your Story

Photos help residents see the people and work behind a project. You do not need special equipment. A clear cellphone photo with a useful caption can go a long way.

What should you photograph?

- Crews working safely, equipment demonstrations, and hands-on activities. Show the work residents may not usually get to see.

- Staff explaining a project, residents participating in an event, and small groups interacting. Look for faces and conversation rather than only the backs of people's heads.
- Before, during, and after views of a project. Take them from a similar location so residents can see what changed.

Simple tips for a better picture

- Clean your lens, hold the phone steady, and tap the subject on the screen to focus. Review the photo before leaving so you can retake it if needed.
- Use natural light when possible. Avoid placing people in front of a bright window. Check for shadows or glare, and use flash only when it improves the picture.
- Move to a safe angle that shows the action. Keep the main subject clear, watch the background, and avoid distracting clutter. Move closer when safe rather than relying on digital zoom.
- Take a few options, including horizontal and vertical photos, so you have choices for different platforms. Choose one to three strong photos that help explain the message.
- Keep safety first. Stay clear of traffic and active equipment, follow site directions, and show appropriate protective equipment and work practices. Do not interrupt work to get a photo.
- Follow your agency's photo and permission procedures, especially for children. Check for private information, documents, or sensitive details in the background.

Send the details with the photo

Give the person posting the photos the activity or project name, location, date, staff or partner names, and a brief explanation of what is happening. Confirm names and titles before publishing. Save original photos in a shared location, with folders or albums named by project and date.

Make photos and videos easier to use

- Add short, useful alternative text describing the photo. For example: Public works crew installing a pedestrian crossing sign beside a marked crosswalk.
- Keep essential dates and directions in the post text as well as the graphic. Use readable type and strong contrast, and avoid crowded graphics.
- Add captions to videos and review automatic captions for accuracy. Describe important visual information in narration or accompanying text. Have translations checked before posting.

Keep the Conversation Going

Make posting manageable

- Choose a schedule your team can maintain. A regular Public Works Tuesday post can share project progress, seasonal reminders, and the work your crews do every day.
- Follow partner agencies and share relevant safety information with credit. Add local details so residents understand how the information applies to them.
- Tag the correct partner account when helpful and use a few relevant hashtags. Check links and preview how the post looks on a phone.
- Reuse a topic in different ways. A project update can become a short post, a progress photo, and a brief video explaining the next step.

Respond to questions professionally

Check comments regularly and answer with clear, verified information. Thank residents for raising a concern, acknowledge the impact, and explain what you know. If you need to check a detail, say so and give a realistic time for a follow-up.

Sample response: ***Thank you for reaching out. We understand the work is affecting your usual route. [Road] is expected to reopen [confirmed date or time], weather permitting. We will post an update if that changes. You can find the detour here: [link].***

- Use the same facts across responses. When the same question comes up repeatedly, add the answer to your next update or a frequently asked questions page.
- Move requests involving personal information to an approved phone, email, or service request channel. Let residents know where to report urgent concerns and when the account is monitored.
- Follow your agency's adopted comment policy and records procedures. Handle moderation consistently and ask the designated staff person for help with difficult situations.
- Route media inquiries to your agency's designated spokesperson. Keep confirmed project facts and a current contact ready to share.

See what is working

Review results monthly. Track reach or views, link clicks, shares, useful questions, and meeting or event participation. Follower counts and likes are useful, but also look at whether residents found the information and took the next step. Communication metrics alone do not show that a project reduced crashes.

Before you post

Check the facts, date, location, spelling, links, photo permissions, and accessibility. Is the safety benefit clear? Have you told residents what to do and where to find more information? Confirm who will answer questions after the post is published.

Webinars and Communication Resources

Keep these resources handy as you plan outreach, answer questions, and share your agency's work. Select a linked title to open the resource. Some recordings may ask you to register before viewing.

Pre-recorded webinars

- NEAPWA Chapter Connects Community Engagement Strategies for Public Works Projects
- Social Media as Easy as 1, 2, 3

Traffic Safety Marketing

Visit Traffic Safety Marketing

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provides communication resources for national safety campaigns, including campaign materials, graphics, videos, and planning calendars. Topics

include pedestrian and bicycle safety, distracted driving, impaired driving, seat belts, speeding, and more.

Open the national safety campaign planning calendars

- Use the current calendar to plan ahead and connect national safety messages with local outreach. Check the year and campaign dates before you schedule a post.
- Choose a campaign that connects with a local need. Add a short introduction explaining why it matters in your community and what residents can do.
- Use the provided materials according to the site's guidelines. Review the message and graphic before sharing, and keep the source credit when applicable.

Platform trends and further reading

Facebook continues to have a broad audience nationally. LinkedIn is also growing, with increased engagement in professional content. These trends can help you choose where to start, while your own audience and results should guide where you spend your time.

Pew Research Center Americans' Social Media Use 2025

LinkedIn Q4 Earnings and Business Highlights July 2026

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