



National Center
for Environmental Health
Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry

A hand is shown holding a smartphone, with the screen displaying a social media interface. The background is a blue-toned network of nodes and lines, with various social media icons (like hearts, thumbs up, and speech bubbles) overlaid on it. The overall theme is digital communication and social media.

Environmental Health Social Media Toolkit

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Introduction

The National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (NCEH/ATSDR) Office of Communication (OC) created this social media toolkit to help partners and environmental health professionals develop and disseminate clear, understandable environmental health content on social media.

How to Use This Toolkit

Public health and environmental health professionals can add the toolkit document as a resource to their communication plans and training documents. Partners can reference the toolkit when developing environmental health-based social media strategies and content.

Using this toolkit will help you:

- Coordinate your social media content to align with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations
- Understand the importance of a social media strategy and its components
- Draft plain language content to share across various social media platforms

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the partners who participated in informational interviews that contributed to the development of this toolkit. The interviews provided valuable information about which guidance and resources will be most helpful to public and environmental health professionals.

Disclaimer

Web addresses of nonfederal organizations are provided solely as a service to readers. Provision of an address does not constitute an endorsement of this organization by CDC or the federal government, and none should be inferred. CDC is not responsible for the content of other organizations' webpages. URL addresses listed in this document were current as of the date of publication in October 2023.

Building Your Social Media Strategy

Developing a social media communication strategy is the first step toward creating social media content for any platform. Your social media communication strategy should be integrated into your overall communication planning, activities, and data collection.

Set Goals and Objectives

First, identify your goals—what do you want to achieve through your social media content?

Because the goals and objectives for each post may be different, the way you exchange ideas, collaborate with partners, or encourage behavior change will also be different. Setting these goals doesn't have to be complicated, but it does have to have a structure to guide you.

Here are some places to start when considering your social media goals:

- Provide timely and accurate information about a topic
- Create awareness about a health threat
- Educate audiences about steps to stay safe
- Strengthen collaborative relationships with partners and stakeholders

Example: Educate audiences about proper generator use to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

SMARTIE Objectives

Once you've identified your goals, developing SMARTIE objectives is the next step. SMARTIE stands for:

- **S**pecific—What do you want to achieve? Be as specific as possible.
- **M**easurable—Find quantifiable indicators that can define your success. Using metrics can help with this.
- **A**ttainable—Is your goal realistic?
- **R**elevant—Does your goal fit into the bigger picture? Useful goals are relevant to a problem that needs solving.
- **T**ime-bound—Can you achieve this goal in a specific amount of time?
- **I**nclusive—Does your goal include traditionally marginalized people—particularly those most impacted—in processes, activities, and decision-making in a way that shares power?
- **E**quitable—Does the goal seek to address systemic injustice, inequity, or oppression?

SMARTIE Objective Templates

- Increase the number of followers by X% [baseline: X] by X date
- Increase engagements per post by X% [quarterly average baseline: X] by X date
- Increase impressions per post by X% [quarterly average baseline: X] by X date
- Increase click-throughs by X% [quarterly average baseline: X] by X date

Identify Your Audience

Priority Audiences

A **priority audience, or primary audience**, is the intended group of people that you want your content to reach. Some examples of priority audiences include

- Healthcare providers
- Parents
- People who live in areas affected by specific natural disasters
- Community members who live near a Superfund site
- People who are pregnant
- People who are at risk for serious health issues related to environmental injustices

Your audience may share similar demographic traits, including

- Age
- Gender
- Location
- Education level
- Socioeconomic level

The more specific you can get when identifying your audience's demographics, the more effectively you can reach them.

Secondary Audiences

Sometimes your priority audience isn't the only group who will see and interact with your communication. For example, if you're creating social media messages for preteens, parents might see those messages too. And if you're creating a campaign for people affected by certain health issues, doctors might use the campaign materials in their practice. These other groups who may interact with your communication are called **secondary audiences**.



Choose an inclusive and diverse audience!

When choosing a priority or secondary audience, you'll want to keep health equity and inclusivity in mind. Are certain priority audiences affected by your issue more than others? Why is that? Are the audiences you're considering diverse in terms of race, age, ethnicity, and gender? Reference [CDC's Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication](#) for more information.

Find Your Audiences

Some questions you can ask yourself to identify your audiences are

- What group of people requires this information, and why?
- How old is my audience?
- When are they usually online?
- Which social platform do they use?
- What do they do for work?
- What's their level of education?
- What content are they most interested in?

How can I learn more about my audiences?

Most social media platforms have an **analytics section**. Examples of platforms that offer analytics include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Choose the Right Platform

Once you've identified your goals, objectives, and audiences, it's time to decide which social media platforms to use. Use the descriptions of each social media platform starting on page 15, as well as the questions listed above, to identify which platform will best support your goals and objectives.

Use Hashtags and Tags

Hashtags

Hashtags are a way to signal that your content relates to a specific topic. To make a hashtag, just put the pound sign before a word or phrase like this (#Hashtag or #ThisIsAHashtag).

You may have noticed that we capitalized every word in that hashtag. This is called camel case, and it helps to make your hashtags more accessible. Capitalizing every word makes it easier for assistive devices like screen readers to read your hashtag. In fact, camel case makes it easier for everyone to understand hashtags at a glance, since the capital letters visually separate the words.

Hashtags position your content as part of a larger conversation. When users search for your hashtag, your content may show up in the search results. And if users are following the hashtag, your content may show up in their feed.

Before you start using a hashtag, it's a good idea to check out what others are posting under that hashtag. You might find out that your hashtag has an unintended meaning or people are using it to talk about a completely different topic. If that's the case, you may want to choose a different hashtag to go with your content.

To learn more about hashtag best practices for each social media platform, check out the content section of this toolkit. Remember, hashtags work well on X (Twitter) and Instagram!

Mention (Tagging Accounts)

You can connect with other accounts by tagging them in your content. To tag a person or organization, put the @ symbol before their handle (the name of their account).

Tagging accounts is a great way to cross-promote and introduce your content to a new audience.

When you tag others, keep in mind the following:

- You can tag people in posts or in specific images within a post.
- When you tag someone, be sure to double-check that you're using the right handle or account name. Handles can vary in spelling across an organization's different accounts (i.e., X, Instagram, etc.), so make sure your tag is written correctly for that specific platform.
- Tag with a purpose—don't just tag any account that may be relevant to your content. Focus on tagging people and organizations who published or are mentioned in your post.

Use Analytics and Metrics

As with all communication activities, evaluation is key to creating great social media content. Depending on your web analytics software or the social platform in question, metrics may be available to help you evaluate how your content is performing.

Metric Definitions

Term	Definition
Impressions	The number of times your content is displayed on a newsfeed
Engagements	Reposts, replies, shares, likes, clicks, and page actions
Click-through rate (CTR)	The number of clicks that your post receives, divided by the number of times your post is shown to social media users
Followers	The number of people who are following your social media accounts
Views (for videos)	The number of times your videos are viewed

You should always track metrics for impressions, engagements, or links to see what kind of content performs well with your audiences. Analytics can also tell the story of how your account is growing or how it could perform better.

You can use external social media analytics software to get a comprehensive look at metrics, but most platforms also offer free analytics (e.g., [X analytics](#)). Be sure to investigate any platform you're using and the kind of analytics it may offer.

Creating Engaging Content for Any Social Media Platform

These best practices can help you draft engaging content for any social media platform.

- **Use visuals and multimedia.** Photos, videos, and graphics make posts more engaging. Include an attention-grabbing piece of media to go along with your text. You can download [environmental health social media graphics](#) to share on your social media channels—and access [digital and print materials](#) to include in your posts.
- **Use action verbs.** When sharing a link with your content, include verbs like “Read”, “Check out”, or “Visit”.
- **Use complete sentences, proper grammar, and punctuation.** Do not use “&”, “w/”, or “abt” when you really mean “and”, “with”, and “about”.
- **Include hashtags and tags, where appropriate.** These features work differently on every social media platform. Use them on X and Instagram to increase visibility and interact with audiences.
- **Lead with a strong hook.** Grab users’ attention right from the start. For example, language like “Did you know?” or “3 tips to help keep your family safe” will capture readers’ interest immediately.
- **Include a specific call to action at the end of the post.** Try replacing “Learn more” with more specific phrases like “Read this article” or “Register now”.
- **Use plain language.** Avoid using jargon. Use straightforward, easy to understand language. For more information on plain language, visit the [Clear Writing Hub](#).
- **Ensure your posts are accessible.** You can expand your reach by using the accessibility features available on each social media platform. One of the most used features is alternative text, or alt text, for visuals. For details, see the [accessibility section](#) of this toolkit.
- **Use shortened links whenever possible.** Use a URL shortener for a cleaner look on social media messages.

Check out [CDC’s Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication](#). Keep these guidelines in mind to ensure your content is culturally responsive, inclusive, and accessible to your audience.

Social Media Writing Tips

Environmental health work often addresses problems that affect whole communities and show up over long periods. And organizations that address these environmental health issues usually begin their work as the situation is still developing. Because of this, it can be hard to communicate to audiences about risk and safety. Use these established social media writing tips to help you create social media content that's informative and transparent.

Consider Risk Communication

During a public health disaster, crisis, or emergency, the role of health communicators is to provide the information the public needs and counter harmful behaviors. Social media can help share the right message at the right time to help people stay safe. During emergencies, keep these risk communication principles in mind:

1. **Be first.** Communicate information quickly.
2. **Be right.** Accurately communicate what you do and do not know about the situation.
3. **Be credible.** Don't compromise honesty and truthfulness.
4. **Express empathy.** Acknowledge people's feelings and challenges.
5. **Promote action.** Give people meaningful action steps they can take.
6. **Show respect.** Respectful communication promotes cooperation and builds trust.

Check out the CDC's [Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication \(CERC\)](#) manual for best practices that use these risk communication principles.

Write Key Messages

Once you've identified objectives and audiences for your social media content, you'll need to define the key messages you want to deliver to your audience. **Key messages are the main points of information you want your audience to hear, understand, and remember.** Good key messages are

- **Concise.** Focus on 3 to 5 key messages per topic. Each one should be read or spoken in 30 seconds or less.
- **Compelling.** Design meaningful information to stimulate action.
- **Memorable.** Keep messages easy to recall and repeat.
- **Tailored.** Adapt the language and scope of information based on your audience.

And remember, key messages are not social media content in themselves. Instead, think of them as topics that guide you when writing social media posts.

Sample Key Message

Check out this key message to help build awareness about radon levels in homes:

- People who live in homes with high radon levels have a higher risk of developing lung cancer.

Use Clear Writing Principles

Clear writing helps people understand your content the first time they see or hear it. Apply these best practices to make your content accessible to as many people as possible:

- **Use active voice.** The active voice makes your writing more direct and often shorter.
- **Keep it short and sweet!** Stick to the recommended number of characters for each social media platform (see the [Social Media Platforms: Best Practices](#) section of this toolkit for details).
- **Use a conversational tone.** A friendly, conversational tone makes your content more approachable.
- **Add supporting visuals.** Choose realistic images that show diverse groups of people.

For more information on clear writing principles, visit NCEH/ATSDR's [Clear Writing Hub](#).

Consider Health Equity

Health equity principles help you meet the specific needs and priorities of the populations you serve—and they help you address all people inclusively, accurately, and respectfully. CDC encourages all public health professionals and partners at the federal, state, and local levels to apply health equity principles across their public health communication work, including social media.

Explore the CDC’s [Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication](#) to use a health equity lens in your work.

Watch Out for Jargon

Environmental health science and research can be complicated, and most people aren’t familiar with the jargon (complex terms) that environmental health professionals use. When you notice jargon in your communication materials, you can

- **Define it.** You usually only have to do this the first time you use a jargon term.
- **Swap it out.** Use a simple alternative.

CDC has an [environmental health thesaurus](#) to help you write about environmental health in plain language. Here are some examples from the thesaurus:

Plain language swaps for common jargon terms

Term	Tip	Try This Instead	Example Sentence
Adverse health effects	Try to avoid this term.	Use “harm” or “harmful health effects” instead of “adverse health effects.”	Drinking water from a contaminated water system may harm your health.
Carcinogenic	Try to avoid this term.	Use “can cause cancer” or “cancer-causing.”	Plutonium can cause cancer.
Exposure	You may be able to avoid this term, but teaching it may be useful.	Depending on context, use “contact with” or specify the type of exposure with terms like “breathe in” or “swallow.”	Contact with mercury can cause serious health problems.
Ingest	Try to avoid this term.	Use “eat” or “swallow.”	Lead can make you sick if you swallow it.
Particulate matter	Try to avoid this term. If you need to use it, define it.	Define it by focusing on more tangible substances people will understand (e.g., dirt, dust).	Tiny bits of dust, dirt, ash, and other materials can float in the air, where you may breathe them in. These are called “particulate matter.”
Potable	Try to avoid this term.	Use “drinkable” or “safe to drink.”	Find out if your tap water is safe to drink.
Toxic	Limit use of this term. Instead, clearly describe what it actually means.	Consider “dangerous,” “harmful,” or “poisonous.”	Lead paint in old houses can poison children.

Add a Call to Action

Calls to action (CTAs) encourage people to take action after reading your social media posts. Social media content works best when it's short, but that doesn't leave much room to explain tricky topics or provide nuance. That's where CTAs come in!

Most of the time, your CTA will be a link to more information. This could be your website, a fact sheet, a video, or a partner resource—any trusted resource that gives your audience more information.

Putting it all together

Let's use the sample key message from before: "People who live in homes with high radon levels have a higher risk of lung cancer."

Sample social media posts for this key message could be

- Do you know how to protect yourself from radon? Radon is an invisible, odorless radioactive gas. Breathing high levels of radon in your home can increase your risk for developing lung cancer. Learn about testing your home for radon: [link]
- Keep your family safe from radon. Radon is an invisible, odorless gas, and too much of it in your home can cause serious health problems—including lung cancer. Find out how to test your home for radon: [link]

Notice that these examples are short, define what radon is, and have a CTA.

Choose Your Voice and Tone

Though they sound similar, voice and tone are different elements that help develop the sound and feel of a social media post's language.

- Tone is the mood of the writing. It's flexible based on the content's topic, context, and reader's likely emotional state.
- Voice is the consistent style or personality of the writing.

Sample Social Media Post

This post from CDC Environment's X account addresses the reader and uses a casual, but informative tone that's appropriate for social media.

The image shows a screenshot of a social media post from CDC Environment (@CDCEnvironment). The post features a dark blue header with the text "Protect Your Hearing this Summer and Year-Round!". Below the header, the text reads: "Listen up! Use hearing protection while enjoying 4th of July fireworks or a concert this summer. Your future #hearing will thank you for it." The background of the post shows silhouettes of a band performing on stage and a crowd of people in the foreground wearing large headphones. The CDC logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the post. The post also includes a "Promote" button and a link: "Learn how to protect your hearing during #FireworksSafetyMonth: bit.ly/3LHapxi".

Social Media Management Tips

Try these tips to get the most out of your social media presence.

Add Media Assets

For each social media post, a wide variety of media assets can help your message stand out and increase engagement and impressions. Consider these assets when building your content:

- **Questions**—Sometimes a message can become repetitive and didactic. Consider asking your readers a question! For example, [this post directed to first responders](#) grabs attention in the first sentence. Use questions to get your audience thinking or ask them to interact in the comments.
- **Static Graphic**—Graphics call a viewer's attention and can inspire them to learn more or take an action. This [CDC post and graphic](#) points people toward the National ALS Registry with a powerful, concise message.
- **Infographic**—Infographics don't have to be long and onerous. [Graphics packed with easy-to-understand numbers and information](#) can keep viewers hooked on your content for longer periods of time.
- **Influencers**—Sharing content from partners and supporters increases the likelihood they will share your content with their followers in return. CDC Environment shares messages from partners with similar goals and values.
- **Video**—Videos can be simple, graphical, and short on social media. It's best to keep videos under 45 seconds to make sure people watch the entire message. Videos have high engagement rates and encourage users to click to learn more. See [this example from CDC about noise-induced hearing loss](#).
- **Animated GIFs**—GIFs are moving pictures comprised of a series of frames, creating a sequence that cycles over and over without stopping. See [CDC Environment's "Are you hurricane ready?" GIF](#) and how we use [GIFs in posts](#) for inspiration.

Navigate Sensitive Topics

Conversations on social media platforms can get heated quickly. Even a seemingly innocent post has the potential to be misinterpreted or taken out of context. Before you hit "post", ask yourself: "What if this becomes a headline? What if it goes viral?"

Here are some tips to avoid unintentional controversy:

- Avoid posing challenging questions on difficult topics, such as personal opinions, propaganda, or politically charged messages.
- Avoid personal pronouns like "I" in social media accounts that are linked to your organization.
- Don't repost third-party messages that take a controversial policy or advocacy position if your organization doesn't support it.
- Keep an eye on comments and conversations to manage any slanderous or malicious messages.

Use the Message Mapping Tool

To flesh out the main message you want to communicate in your social media posts, as well as the kinds of metrics you want to track, use NCEH/ATSDR's [message mapping tool](#). This tool can help you keep your social media content organized and aligned with your strategy. It helps you identify main message, audience, metrics to track, and which channel to use.

To view the message mapping tool, [click here](#).

Follow a Set Schedule

Once you have an idea of what your posts will look like based on your key messages, plan your timing with an editorial calendar. An editorial calendar is basically a schedule for your posts. It helps you create a consistent and relevant presence across your social media platforms.

Make sure to include key dates in your calendar and plan posts before, during, and after events you want to highlight. For example, your organization may have an annual event you'll want to promote.

Consider joining in on larger conversations, such as National Health Observances (NHOs) or conferences. These are great opportunities to tap into online buzz that's already happening, usually by adding the right hashtag to your posts. Some examples relevant to environmental health NHOs are

- National Radon Action Month
- World Cancer Day
- Earth Day
- UV Safety Month
- World Environmental Health Day
- National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

For more examples, [view this full list of observances](#) that NCEH/ATSDR recognizes.

Engage Critically

Think about which social media platforms work best for your content, and change your tone to match your communication goals. Content for professionals works better on LinkedIn, while consumer content works better on X and Facebook. Diversify your engagement across different platforms to reach different audiences.

Keep in mind that some platforms—like X—encourage more passionate viewpoints. Unfortunately, environmental health content often has political connotations even when it states only facts. Consider your organization's voice and where you want to position yourself.

If you'd like to take an inclusion and equity perspective, use the [Health Equity Guiding Principles](#).

Accessibility Best Practices

508 Compliance

Section 508 requires federal agencies to develop, procure, maintain, and use information and communications technology (ICT) that is accessible to people with disabilities. All social media content should be Section 508 compliant (508c) to the maximum extent possible. This includes, but is not limited to

- Including closed captions, audio descriptions, and transcripts for videos
- Choosing appropriate headings and [color contrast](#)
 - Testing your color palette for 508c with [Accessible Color Palette Builder](#) or [Contrast Grid](#)
 - Measuring contrast between text and background using [WebAIM's Color Contrast Checker](#) or a [Sketch plugin](#)
- Using camel case in hashtags and URLs. Camel case means capitalizing the first letter of each word.
- Including alternative text, or alt text, and an image description in the caption for photos and other images. Most platforms provide an option to add alt text when crafting the post.

You can also [use ANDI](#) to check for 508 compliance issues and get practical tips to improve accessibility. ANDI is an open-source tool created by the Accessible Solutions Branch of the Social Security Administration.

Alternative (Alt) Text

Most social media platforms provide the option to add alternative text, or alt text, to any image or icon. Alt text is a description of the image or icon that you can include for visually impaired readers who use a screen reader on their device. Using alt text makes your content accessible to a wider audience!

Best Practices for Using Alt Text

1. **Be clear and descriptive.** Explain the main points of the image.
2. **Describe the visual.** Describe the visual (image, video, animation) for those who can't see it, hear it, or otherwise fully experience it.
3. **Be specific.** Include names, locations, and any other specific details that give the reader context. All text in the graphic should be included in the alt text.

Sample Alt Text



This graphic from a CDC Environment post has the following alt text: *"A person looking at the Heat and Health Tracker with text that says, 'CDC's Heat & Health Tracker. See how extreme heat affects your county. New Daily Heat Illness Data.'"*

Learn more about [improving the accessibility of social media in government](#).

Social Media Platforms

In this section, we'll explore best practices for specific social media platforms.

Social media platforms are always evolving, and sometimes changes can happen quickly. If you have questions about a specific platform, check its website to get the latest updates straight from the source.

CDC/ATSDR Social Media Accounts

You can leverage NCEH/ATSDR's and CDC's social media accounts by sharing NCEH/ATSDR and CDC posts on your organization's social media platforms. NCEH/ATSDR has its own X account, [@CDCEnvironment](#), which NCEH/ATSDR's Office of Communication manages. Additionally, NCEH/ATSDR content is posted on or shared through CDC's agency-level Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and Snapchat channels.

You can view NCEH/ATSDR's social media accounts, learn about social media policies, and check out CDC's environmental health social media resources and accounts on the [Environmental Health Social Media webpage](#).

X (Twitter)

X, formerly known as Twitter, is a news and social networking platform. As of 2023, X's character limit for most users is 280 characters per post. Paying subscribers can include up to 10,000 characters per post. However, even if you have a subscription, we recommend aiming for 280 characters or less because people are used to reading shorter content on the platform.


If you have a public X profile, your posts, reposts, replies, and likes are publicly viewable and searchable. Your followers will see your posts and other content directly in their feed.

X Platform Features

Feature	Definition
Followers	People who follow your account so they see your posts and content in their feed.
Hashtag	Use the # symbol to tag topics that are relevant to your post (e.g., #PublicHealth). That way, users who follow or click on the hashtag can see your post. For details, see the Hashtag section of this toolkit.
Mention	Use the @ symbol to publicly talk to, mention, or give credit to another user (e.g., @CDCgov). For details, see the Mention section of this toolkit.
Reply	Reply directly to another user publicly. New reply settings allow you to control who can reply to your content. Learn more about reply settings .
Repost	Share another user's post with your followers (you can also add your own commentary to the shared post by using "Quote Post")
Like	Show your appreciation for another user's posts. Learn more about liking posts on X .
Polls	Ask your followers an engaging question by creating a poll. Learn more about polls .
Lists	Create a curated newsfeed where you can customize, organize, and prioritize the posts you see in your timeline. Learn more about lists .

Continued

Feature	Definition
Threads	A thread is a series of connected posts from one account, designed to be read in order. You can use a thread when you want to update followers about information happening in real time. Learn more about threads.
Carousel	Pay to post a series of photos or videos that users can swipe through in a single post. Carousels can include up to 6 photos or videos. Learn more about carousels.



Chats

Chats are scheduled conversations on X, usually hosted by a handful of accounts with information to share on a single topic.

Tips to write engaging content on X

Follow these guidelines to write engaging content on X:

- 1. Keep it short.** Aim for 280 characters or fewer (that’s the character limit for non-paying users).
- 2. Use relevant hashtags** to participate in mass conversations.
- 3. Engage with other accounts** by liking, replying, and reposting content.
- 4. Use visuals.** Images, animated graphics, tables, and videos work well on X.

Sample Post

Here’s a good example of a post from @CDCgov. It’s short, written in active voice, includes a good hook, and has an engaging photo attached.



CDC Environment @CDCEnvironment Promote ...

Loud noise is all around us—when you attend sporting events, listen to music, or even mow the lawn!

Protect your hearing by wearing ear plugs around loud noises and turning down the volume of your television, radio, and headphones.

Get more tips: bit.ly/45HtAQi
#NPYHM

Have you heard?
Loud noise can cause **hearing loss!**

Exposure to loud or prolonged noise damages auditory cells and nerves in your ear. Take steps to protect your ears now so you don't experience hearing loss later.

Labels in infographic: Inner ear, Auditory nerve, Healthy cells, Healthy nerves, Damaged cells, Damaged nerves. **BEFORE AFTER**

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Facebook

Facebook remains the most popular social media platform among U.S. adults. CDC’s agency level Facebook account is [@CDC](#). Users interact with friends, family, and others with similar interests. There’s no character limit on Facebook, but it’s still best practice to keep messages short—aim for under 350 characters to avoid your content getting cut off by the “see more” button.

If you have a public Facebook page, your posts and stories are publicly viewable and searchable. People who follow your page will see your posts and other content directly in their feed.

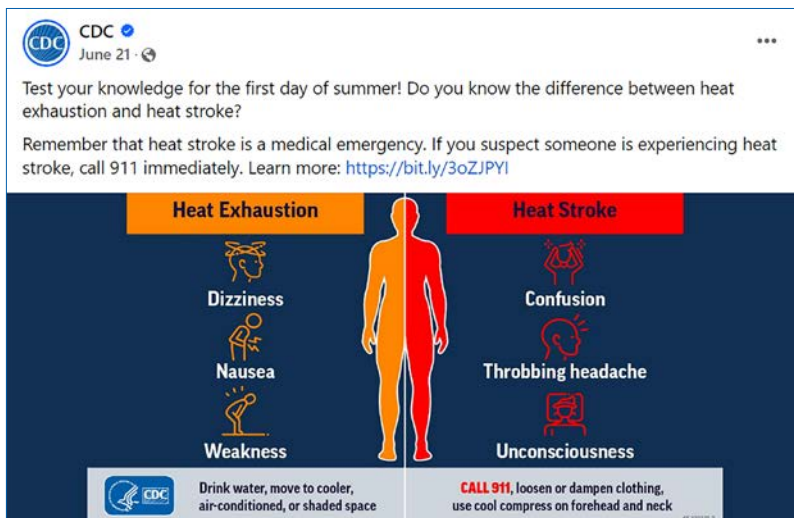
Facebook Platform Features

Feature	Definition
Followers	People who follow your account so they can see posts, stories, and other content from you in their feed.
Mention	Mention or give credit to another Facebook user in your post. For details, see the Mention section of this toolkit.
Like	Show your appreciation for another user’s content.
Reaction	Users can share how they feel about content using emojis (e.g., happy, sad, shocked).
Stories	Create videos or images that stay on the platform for 24 hours. When stories expire, they’re automatically archived (so users won’t be able to see them anymore, but they will still be visible in the channel’s analytics section). Stories should be used for quick bursts of information that don’t need a lot of text.
Comment	Reply directly to another user in the comment section of a post.
Live streams	Record a video and stream it to your followers in real time.

Facebook Content Tips

Follow these guidelines to write engaging Facebook posts:

- 1. Keep it short.** Aim for 350 characters or fewer.
- 2. Engage with other accounts** by liking, commenting, and sharing content.
- 3. Use a casual tone.** Keep things simple and informal.
- 4. Spell out abbreviations.** If you’re using an abbreviation, make sure to define it somewhere in the post.
- 5. Don’t use hashtags.** Facebook users don’t respond well to hashtags.
- 6. Use visuals.** Try different types of visual content (e.g., photos, reels, videos, infographics, and charts).



Sample Facebook Post

This example from the CDC Facebook page has a casual tone, doesn't use abbreviations, and includes an engaging graphic!

Instagram

Instagram is a platform used to share pictures and videos publicly or privately.

If you have a public Instagram profile, your posts and stories are publicly viewable and searchable. Your followers will see your posts and other content directly in their feed.

Instagram Platform Features

Feature	Definition
Followers	People who follow your account so they can see posts, stories, and other content from you in their feed.
Hashtag	Use the # symbol to tag topics that are relevant to your post (e.g., #PublicHealth). That way, users who follow or click on the hashtag can see your post. For details, see the Hashtag section of this toolkit.
Mention	Mention, tag, or give credit to another Instagram account. For details, see the Mention section of this toolkit.
Like	Show your appreciation for another user's content.
Comment	Reply directly to another user in the comments section of a post.
Stories	Create short videos or images that stay on the platform for 24 hours. Stories should be used for quick bursts of information that don't need a lot of text.
Save	Bookmark content so you can come back to it later.
Live streams	Record a video and stream it to your followers in real time.
Bio	A spot to include a brief account description and add in any relevant links for audiences to click.



Instagram Reels

Instagram reels are short-form, vertical videos. Content creators can record and edit together video and photo clips set to music. They're a great way to create engaging content. [Learn more about Reels.](#)

Instagram Content Tips

Follow these guidelines to create engaging Instagram content:

1. **Keep it short.** Aim for 125 characters or fewer. Use the caption to give context to the image or graphic.
2. **Have a high-quality, eye-catching image or video to upload.** Since Instagram focuses on visual content, the most important piece of an Instagram post is the image or video. This is a great platform to share [public service announcement \(PSA\) videos](#) or [infographics](#).
3. **Use a friendly tone.** Show your personality and keep things informal so users can get to know your organization!
4. **Use relevant hashtags.** Help people discover your content and participate in mass conversations about a topic.
5. **Share a link in your bio or story.** At the end of your post, direct users to the resource you've posted in your bio with a phrase like "Use the link in our bio to learn more." You can also share a link in a story.

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you can lose some of your hearing after a few minutes around these noises?

	Fireworks 140-160 dB
	Ambulance Sirens 110-129 dB
	Lawn Mowers 80-100 dB

Always protect your hearing. Wear hearing protection such as earplugs or earmuffs.

Sample Instagram Post

This is an Instagram post from @cdc.gov. The eye-catching graphic and brief caption make the information easy to digest.



cdc.gov Being around too many loud sounds can cause hearing loss. Remember to pack earplugs before you leave home for a sporting event, concert, or other loud occasion.

During Better Hearing and Speech Month, visit the link in our bio to learn more tips to protect your hearing.

#CDC #PublicHealth #HearingLoss

Facebook and Instagram Live Events

Livestreaming is streaming media simultaneously recorded and broadcast in real time. Both Facebook and Instagram have livestreaming abilities. [Learn more about Live Events from Meta](#), the parent company of Facebook and Instagram.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking platform that helps professionals connect. Professionals can create profiles and share information about their education, job history, and skills. Users and pages also share relevant guidance, industry updates, and learning opportunities to their followers.

LinkedIn Platform Features

Feature	Definition
Followers	People who follow your LinkedIn page so they can see posts and other content from you in their feed.
Mention	Mention or give credit to another LinkedIn user. For details, see the Mention section of this toolkit.
Like	Show your appreciation for another user's content.
Reaction	Users can share how they feel about a piece of content with emojis (e.g., celebrate, support, and insightful).
Comment	Reply directly to another user in the comments section of a post.

LinkedIn Content Tips

Follow these guidelines to write engaging LinkedIn content.

- 1. Keep it short.** Aim for 500 characters or fewer.
- 2. Use a more professional tone.** Content should be tailored to professional audiences (e.g., healthcare providers, school administrators, public health professionals, etc.).
- 3. Spell out abbreviations.** If you're using an abbreviation, make sure to define it the first time you mention it in the post.
- 4. Don't use hashtags.** LinkedIn users don't respond well to hashtags.
- 5. Use visuals.** Visuals like photos, animated GIFs, or short videos grab people's attention!

The image shows a LinkedIn post from the CDC. The post text reads: "Climate change affects human health, but not everyone is equally at risk. Learn more about the effects of climate change on community health, by joining CDC's Environmental Health Nexus webinar collaboration with the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration on March 17 at 1 p.m. ET via Zoom. To register, visit bit.ly/22CHWebinar." Below the text is a graphic for the webinar titled "Climate Change and Health: The Risks to Community Health and Health Care Utilization". The graphic lists "OPENING REMARKS" by Patrick Breyasse, Ph.D., CPH, Director, NCEH/ATSDR, CDC, and "SPEAKERS" including Suma Nair, Ph.D., M.S., RD, Director, OQ, HRSA/EPH; Aris Mastagan, M.A., Health Scientist, CDC; and Elizabeth Griffone, M.D., FAHP, Guest Researcher, CDC. The event is scheduled for "March 17, 2022 1 p.m. (ET)". At the bottom, it provides "Webinar Registration: bit.ly/22CHWebinar" and logos for CDC and HRSA Health Center Program.

Sample LinkedIn Post

This post from CDC's LinkedIn page has a more formal tone, doesn't use abbreviations, includes a call to action, and has an engaging graphic!

Pinterest

Pinterest is a social media platform where users can curate collections of images that link out to other websites, social media content, or products. Unlike X, Facebook, and Instagram, Pinterest is less about showing off a company's brand and more about providing content for your audience to browse.

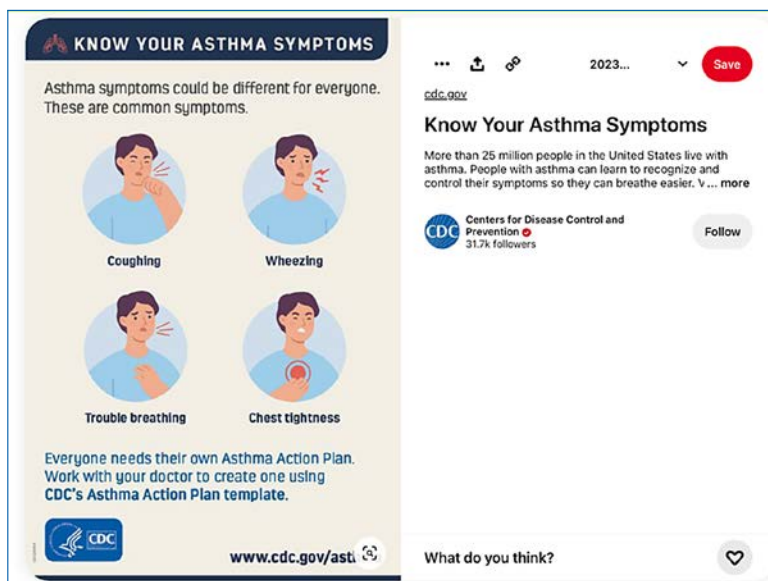
Pinterest Platform Features

Feature	Definition
Pin	Bookmark an image or video on Pinterest. Images or videos typically link out to other websites, social media content, or products.
Like	Show your support for another user's content.
Save	Save images and videos from other Pinterest users to your own boards.
Boards	A curated collection of pins, usually organized by specific topics or categories.

Tips to create engaging content on Pinterest

Follow these tips to create engaging content on Pinterest:

1. **Have a high-quality, eye-catching image or video to upload.** The most important piece of content on Pinterest is the image or video. This is a great platform to share tips, tricks, or infographics that can link back to your website!
2. **Keep it short.** Aim for 100 characters or fewer.
3. **Have clear titles and descriptions.** Using plain language and keywords will make it easier for users to find your content when they search for relevant topics.
4. **Engage with other accounts** by pinning and favoriting content.
5. **Include your logo.** Put a logo on every image or video you make but keep it subtle.
6. **Add a link back to your website.** Check that the link is active and loads quickly.



Sample Pinterest Post

This is an example post from CDC's Pinterest account. The image is high quality and eye-catching, the title is clear about the purpose of the post, and the content is under 100 characters. The CDC logo is included in the bottom left corner.

Snapchat

Snapchat is a social messaging app that lets users personalize and share photos and video clips with friends.

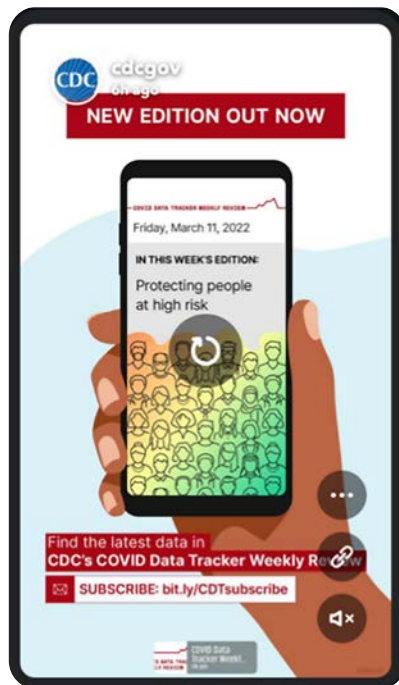
Snapchat Platform Features

Feature	Definition
Snap	A picture or video that you send through the app to one or more of your friends. Snaps can be a maximum of 60 seconds long.
Stories	Videos or images that you share with all your friends. Stories stay on the app for 24 hours before automatically disappearing. It's important to note that the time period (24 hours) can be changed as a paid feature. The information you provide should be short and to the point.
Followers	People who follow your Snapchat page so they can see your stories in their feed.
Filter	Filters are an overlay for your image or video, sometimes with special effects.
Discover page	On this page, users can watch stories of accounts they follow and see content from many creators.

Tips to create engaging Snapchat content

Follow these guidelines to create engaging Snapchats:

- 1. Have a high-quality, eye-catching image or video to upload.** The most important piece is the image or video. You can take a photo or video directly from the app or upload from your camera roll.
- 2. Keep it super short.** Since Snapchat images and videos only stay on the screen for a short amount of time, you'll want to keep anything you write under 50 characters per frame.
- 3. Use the filters and effects.** These add-ons make your content more engaging.
- 4. Engage with other accounts** by watching and commenting on their content.
- 5. Use a casual tone.** The app was designed to be casual and fun, so keep it authentic!
- 6. Try to avoid hashtags.** Hashtags don't work the same way on Snapchat. You can search for hashtags in the search bar, but using one in your message won't include you in mass conversations like it does on X and Instagram.



Sample Snapchat Post

This post from the CDC's Snapchat account has an eye-catching image with minimal text, and the call to action works well with Snapchat's swipe-up feature.

YouTube

YouTube is the number one site for sharing and watching videos. To find NCEH/ATSDR YouTube videos, visit the [CDC's YouTube playlist on environmental health](#).

YouTube Platform Features

Feature	Definition
Subscribers	People who follow an account and get notified when the account shares new content.
Like	Show your appreciation for another user's content.
Comment	Reply directly to a user in the comment section of a video.
Playlists	Combine videos about similar topics into a list that users can browse or watch in order.
Live streams	Record a video and stream it to your followers in real time.

YouTube Content Tips

Follow these guidelines to create engaging YouTube videos:

1. Have a high-quality, eye-catching video to upload. Record in HD for the highest quality resolution.
2. Use background music or voiceovers if your content doesn't include people talking.
3. Use closed captions to make sure your videos are accessible.
4. Use a fun and upbeat [tone](#) by using common, everyday words and casual language in video scripts.
5. Include a closing screen at the end with your logo and a link to your website.
6. Engage with other accounts by watching, liking, and commenting on content.

Sample YouTube Video

Here's [an example](#) of a video from CDC's YouTube account that got great engagement and follows the tips listed above.

Appendix

Appendix A

Message Mapping Tool

This document serves as a tool to help organize information when developing content for social media. The purpose of this resource is to make it easier to identify the main message, audiences, and appropriate social media channels to communicate environmental health information. When developing content, keep in mind the overall goals of your organization's social media strategy.

Follow the instructions below to help create your message, identify your audience and goals, and think creatively on interacting with the people you are trying to reach. Developing engaging content for target audiences can lead to your content being reposted by your audiences and other partners and stakeholders.

Creating Your Message

Category	Questions to be Addressed
Topic Description	What is the one sentence that describes your topic and desired outcome?
Target Audience	What group(s) of people need to hear and understand your message? Who needs to take action?
Goal	What is your expectation for your content? How will you measure success? If it is general awareness, you will want to maximize impressions. If it is getting viewers to your landing page, you will want to encourage people to click. <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Clicks?● Impressions?● Views?● Engagements?

Key Message(s):

What is the primary idea or assertion your audience should know?

Target Audience(s):

Who is your **primary** audience?
What group requires this information?

Target Audience(s):

Who is your **secondary** audience?
What makes them different?

Message 1:

Tailor your key message to resonate best with your **target audience**.

Message 2:

Tailor your key message to resonate best with your **secondary audience**.

Supporting Facts:

What additional information can you offer to support your key message?

Supporting Facts:

What additional information can you offer to support your key message?

CTA:

What is the “call to action” or next step the audience should take?

CTA:

What is the “call to action” or next step the audience should take?

Segmented Social Media Content:

Weave key message 1 with messages and appropriate CTA. Keep social post under two concise sentences if possible. Keep in mind the character limits for each platform.

Segmented Social Media Content:

Weave key message 1 with messages and appropriate CTA. Keep social post under two concise sentences if possible. Keep in mind the character limits for each platform.

Segmented Social Media Channels:

Upon completion of your content production, identify which channels your audience is most likely to discover the information. For example, LinkedIn has a higher engagement rate with professionals. Create specific content for specific audiences to be posted on the channels in which they engage most.

X/Twitter Post:**Facebook Post:****LinkedIn Post:****Instagram Post:**

Appendix B

Social Media Resources

- [CDC’s Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication \(CERC\)](#)
- [NCEH/ATSDR Clear Writing Hub](#)
- [Plain Language Materials & Resources](#)
- [Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication](#)
- [Climate & Health Social Media Toolkit](#)
- [Public Service Announcements for Natural Disasters and Severe Weather](#)
- Downloadable graphics:
 - [Environmental Health Social Media Graphics](#)
 - [Hearing Loss Toolkit](#)
 - [Lead Poisoning: Social Media Graphics](#)
 - [Radon Communication Materials](#)
 - [Air Quality Infographics](#)

Sample Content Calendar

A content calendar can help you plan upcoming posts, manage campaigns, and monitor results. Use this sample content calendar to map out your social media content.

Topic	Date	Channel (X/Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest)	Message (Text content, hashtags, links)	Image Thumbnail	Notes (X/Twitter character count, publication status, etc.)	Metrics (Impressions, engagements, click throughs, video views, etc.)

