



QUICK REFERENCE: MANAGING MISINFORMATION

Essential Steps for County Governments

Understanding Misinformation

Key indicators: Lack of credible sources, emotionally charged content, or manipulated images.

- Misinformation spreads quickly and can **undermine public trust**.
- Common sources: **misinterpretations, satire, or lack of credible sources**

Educating the Public

- **Host workshops and trainings** on identifying misinformation.
- **Use PSAs, infographics, and social media** to spread awareness.
- **Encourage critical thinking** by teaching residents to verify sources before sharing.

When and How to Correct Misinformation

- **When to respond:** If false information is spreading widely or could cause harm.
- **How to respond:**
 - **State the correct information** clearly.
 - **Cite credible sources** (government agencies, academic research).
- **Use simple language and visuals** for better understanding.

Example Response Template: "Thank you for your comment. To clarify, [correct information]. For more details, visit [official source link]."

Social Media Misinformation Management

Tip: A well-crafted infographic or video can be more effective than a long post.

- **Monitor platforms regularly** for misinformation trends.
- **Use digital graphics and fact-based captions** when posting corrections.
- **Leverage community influencers** to help amplify accurate information.
- **Report harmful misinformation** to platform moderators for removal.

Partnering with Media to Combat Misinformation

- **Be proactive:** Issue press releases when misinformation arises.
- **Build relationships with journalists** to ensure accurate reporting.
- **Request corrections** if false information is published.
- **Escalate concerns** to newsroom editors if necessary.

Legal and Ethical Considerations

- **Seek legal advice** for reputational damage or false claims that incite panic.
- **Ensure ethical media practices** to maintain credibility and trust.



Key Takeaways

- Misinformation is an ongoing challenge, but **county governments can take control**.
- A **proactive approach** — educating the public, monitoring social media, and engaging with media — is essential.
- Maintaining **nonpartisan, fact-based communication** builds trust and strengthens community resilience.

Identifying Misinformation Social Media Instructions and Template Guidelines

- Select a digital graphic that aligns with your message.
- Upload the graphic to your social media post draft.
- Choose one of the template captions below, copy it, and paste it into the draft post.
- Add any additional information you would like to include. (Remember, X only allows 280 characters unless you have a special subscription. If needed, continue your message in the comments if it does not fit in one X post.)
- Post the content.
- Monitor the post to ensure “trolls” do not discredit your post.

Template A: Sample Caption

Fact or Fake? Misinformation is rampant. Here are some tips to spot online fakes:

- Cross-check sources: Look for the same information across credible news outlets and fact-checking organizations (e.g., Snopes, PolitiFact, FactCheck.org).
- Consult experts: If the information concerns specialized topics (e.g., health, science), reach out to professionals or authoritative bodies to confirm the facts.
- Check the date and context: Sometimes old news or misrepresented events can resurface, misleading audiences.

Template B: Sample Caption

Misinformation can spread rapidly. Avoid falling for the false narrative. Here are some tips to help you spot misleading content:

- Check the source: Verify the credibility of the source. Is it a reputable news outlet or an obscure website?
- Look for evidence: Are there credible references or data supporting the claims? Misinformation often lacks evidence.
- Analyze the tone: Be cautious of overly emotional tones. It might be designed to manipulate your feelings.
- Cross-check information: Compare the information with other reliable sources. Consistency across multiple reputable platforms can indicate accuracy.
- Be skeptical of images and videos: Artificial intelligence (AI) has made visual content more difficult to verify. Use reverse image search tools to check if images or videos have been altered or taken out of context.

Stay informed and think critically about online content. Share responsibly! 🌐💡