

# 10 social media lessons learned from the 2017 Ohio State Fair ride accident

*From Alicia Shoults, Marketing and PR Director at Ohio Expo Center & State Fair*

1. **Respond immediately on social media.** Twitter is a preferred way to get the message out. This was the first tweet from @OhioStateFair: "There has been a report of a ride incident. We are investigating and will report information as available."
2. **Review all scheduled social media content** and remove anything that does not have the right content or tone in light of the crisis. Also check your social media ads.
3. **Review advertising that is in the market.** In Ohio, the FireBall ride was featured in a TV commercial and it had to be revised. Remember to change or delete related video or other ads posted on social media.
4. **When you have enough information, make an official statement.** "Our hearts are heavy for the families of those involved in last night's tragic accident. We have shut down all rides until the state has inspected each and every ride again and deemed them to be safe. Gates open at 9 am and other activities will resume as scheduled." This was first posted on Facebook and a screengrab of it was tweeted. With the new Twitter rules, your posts can likely work on both platforms.
5. **Be sincere, but strategic.** Craft thoughtful messages that honor the loved ones of those impacted. It is important to show grief, but not to claim it as "our grief."
6. **Use no-frills updates.** Think of them as mini press releases. "Fair is open & activities on as scheduled. Rides are closed & undergoing safety inspections. Our thoughts continue to be w/those impacted." "Inspectors making good progress. Kiddieland, SkyGlider and Giant Slide to open early afternoon."
7. **Cautiously and strategically move forward with promotion.** Judiciously sprinkle in content true to your roots and that reinforce the reasons the fair exists. Ohio focused in agriculture, education and youth exhibitors. Messaging centered on the thousands of hardworking exhibitors who work all year long on projects to be showcased at the state level.
8. **Be aware of dates, events and milestones** that are related to the incident. Memorials, funerals, anniversaries, etc.
9. **Let others help tell your story.** Use retweets, shares and reposts from vendors, agencies, etc. You will find these posts because you are monitoring social media.
10. **Save screengrabs, data and good ideas.** Then update your crisis communications plan with lessons learned.