

VIRTUAL OPERATIONS

Updates and new technology along with improvements in hardware have allowed for some incident response operations to be done virtually.

Many traditional face-to-face practices have potential to promote spread of COVID-19 requiring reevaluation of operational procedures to prevent virus transmission. Incident operations have traditionally involved meeting in groups or working in close quarters to share information. Information presented below is meant to provide guidance on some of the available tools and tool selection considerations that can promote virtual operations, helping limit virus spread during incident management.

Available Tools:

Incident responders can consider developing operational capabilities using these tools:

- Enterprise video communications (Zoom, GoToMeeting)
- Live streaming platforms (Periscope)
- Instant messaging systems (Slack, Skype)
- Video teleconferencing or video calling (VTC, Facetime)
- Mobile applications (Wind Ninja, Collector, Google Forms, QR Code Readers)
- AGOL (Story maps, story journals, data sharing and collaboration)
- Government web based applications (INCIWEB, EGP, WFDSS, IFTDSS)
- Government/public video feeds, portable incident video equipment

Tool/Application Considerations

Units will need to define task purpose and need to conclude appropriate tool/applications for use.

- Number in audience and purpose of meeting. Video platforms have participant limits.
- Is there a need to display/share information? Will Agency firewalls limit use or sharing?
- Will other entities such as county agencies or the public be able to access the applications and do the tool/applications have a good feedback loop or ability to comment?
- Use of virtual tools may require time to train and learn. Some tools require multiple presenters to handle presentations and coordination of feedback.
- Can tools/applications record presentations or save data for required documentation?
- Licenses may be limited or need purchased, or passwords require time to acquire.
- Does the tool/application have the ability to encrypt video or data sharing for security?
- Have capabilities been explored for tools/applications we currently have? Are there low tech solutions that could be used that would be effective in a virtual environment?
- What equipment is needed to use the tools virtually and be effective? Cameras, Monitors, portable printers, scanners headsets, hotspots, MiFi.

The tools/applications listed above are not all-inclusive and each unit should continue research to update and improve capabilities. As units develop and acquire applications or processes enhancing virtual work capabilities, collaboration and information sharing will be key to promote safe work solutions as we deal with COVID-19.