VIRTUAL OPERATIONS SUPPORT TEAM

DESCRIPTION	The Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST) completes web-based missions to monitor, amplify, filter and develop web-based communication platforms for Incident Command and coordination organizations responding to crisis situations
RESOURCE CATEGORY	Communications
RESOURCE KIND	Team
OVERALL FUNCTION	The VOST: 1. Activates at the request of an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) 2. Assesses and evaluates where and how a community is sharing information online during crisis 3. Monitors available and public web-based communications on social media and news organization websites to identify crisis needs, damage assessment and community sentiment surrounding emergency events 4. Amplifies or disseminates public information at the request of the AHJ 5. Filters online content and develops "Listening Reports", which include a mission overview, trend analysis and summary of mission-based results at regular time intervals the AHJ requests 6. Develops web-based platforms for regional response, at the request of the emergency response organization
COMPOSITION AND ORDERING SPECIFICATIONS	1. Discuss logistics for deploying this team, such as working conditions, length of deployment, security, lodging, transportation and meals, prior to deployment 2. Requestor and provider discuss the web-based missions based on incident needs 3. This team typically operates virtually with regular check-in intervals, as the requestor establishes 4. Requestor may order the VOST Leader be on-site with the requestor, based on specialties necessary for incident and value of proximity to the emergency response 5. Requestor may order a VOST Administrator to monitor administrative functions of the VOST and help integrate it into incident response 6. Requestor briefs team on information collection and storage protocols for Personally Identifiable Information (PII), as relevant to mission

Each type of resource builds on the qualifications of the type below it. For example, Type 1 qualifications include the qualifications in Type 2, plus an increase in capability. Type 1 is the highest qualification level.

COMPONENT	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4	NOTES
MINIMUM PERSONNEL PER TEAM	17	12	6	3	Variable, based on the scale of the incident, whether the incident is high-profile from media perspective and the pace of online engagement by the community
MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT PERSONNEL PER TEAM	Same as Type 2	Same as Type 3, PLUS: 1 - VOST Leader	Same as Type 4	1 - National Incident Management System (NIMS) VOST Leader	If team is working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, team will require two 12-hour based team leaders to cover both shifts

COMPONENT	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4	NOTES
SUPPORT PERSONNEL PER TEAM	Same as Type 2, PLUS: 5 - VOST Member	Same as Type 3, PLUS: 5 - VOST Member	Same as Type 4, PLUS: 3 - VOST Member	2 - VOST Member	Variable, based on the scale of the incident, whether the incident is high-profile from media perspective and pace of online engagement by the community
INFORMATION GATHERING CAPABILITY PER TEAM	1. Platform development and/or management of platforms 2. Extensive mapping requests	1. Geo-specific capabilities 2. Message creation and dissemination across web-based platforms	1. Message amplification from official sources 2. Multi-platform activities	1. Social media monitoring across basic platforms 2. Trend analysis	Not Specified
COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT PER TEAM	Same as Type, 2 PLUS: 5 - Computers 5 - Cell phones	Same as Type 3, PLUS: 6 - Computers 6 - Cell phones	Same as Type 4, PLUS: 3 - Computers 3 - Cell phones	3 - Computers 3 - Cell phones Online accounts for major platforms under evaluation	Requestor and provider discuss specific equipment the requestor will provide

NOTES

1. Nationally typed resources represent the minimum criteria for the associated component and capability.
2. Requestor provides team with support, such as security, fuel and power for recharging phones, computers and other rechargeable devices.
3. This team focuses on publicly available social media and online communications. It does not engage in hacking-based behaviors or collection of data for investigation purposes.

REFERENCES

1. FEMA, NIMS 509: Virtual Operations Support Team Leader
2. FEMA, NIMS 509: Virtual Operations Support Team Member
3. FEMA, NIMS 509: Virtual Operations Support Team Administrator
4. FEMA, NIMS, October 2017