

Emergency : Use Twitter Without an Internet Connection

Written by Jacqueline Lawson
Friday, 02 November 2012 09:39



Yes, we live in Houston, and Sandy did not get us. But Ike did!

As a newcomer to Houston, and having respect for Mother Nature, I bought me an Emergency Go Kit. Everyone should have one. It has everything in it I need to survive for several days; in a backpack I can carry or roll. But I got to thinking, what about communications? How long can I go without a tweet?

It's a ridiculous question that would have sounded even more ridiculous just a few years ago, but Twitter (along with your traditional radio) is an important resource for breaking news when the world is going... to Sandy.

If you lose cable, broadcast signal and Internet, you can still receive tweets about the storm -- even if you don't have a Twitter account.

This also goes beyond Internet service. If you're without a WiFi connection, accessing just a few critical tweets instead of the whole stream is a good way to conserve your phone's battery and still get the information you need. It's also worth noting that this workaround requires cellular service.

FAST FOLLOW:

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You don't need a Twitter account to get important tweets sent to your phone. Just text the word "Follow [username]" to 40404 on a U.S.-based phone. For instance, if you want to receive tweets from @CapitalWeather and you don't have a Twitter account, text "Follow capitalweather" to 40404.

If you live around D.C., other Twitter accounts that might be good for this Fast Follow feature include @DrGridlock, @PepcoConnect, @CraigatFEMA, @EricFisherTWC, @MayorVinceGray and @BreakingStorm. We've got a whole Twitter list here.

To turn off this feature, text the words OFF or STOP or LEAVE to 40404. To turn it back on, text ON to 40404.

Keep in mind that standard messaging rates apply. Every tweet is a text.

If you do have a Twitter account, here are the basics:

CONNECT YOUR PHONE TO TWITTER:

Text the word "START" to 40404.

Twitter will send you text, reply to 40404 with the word "YES".

Now text your username to 40404.

Do not use the @ symbol. For example, @WashingtonPost would be WashingtonPost.

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Finally, send your password to 40404. It is case sensitive.

Now do yourself a favor and save 40404 as a contact on your phone.

SEND TWEETS:

Text tweets by sending them to 40404. From Twitter:

@[username] + message - shows your tweet as a reply directed at another person, and causes your tweet to save in their mentions tab.

D [username] + message - sends that person a Direct Message that goes to their device, and saves in their web archive. You can also use M [username] + message to send a private message!

RETWEET [username] - sends that user's latest tweet to your followers (also known as aRetweet).

FOLLOW [username] - allows you to start following a specific user, as well as receive SMS notifications.

TURN OFF MOBILE NOTIFICATION, SAVE BATTERY LIFE

The flood of tweets you receive after connecting your phone to your Twitter account might be too much for your sanity and your phone's battery. To turn off Twitter notification via SMS, text the word "OFF" to 40404. If you want to pick and choose what kind of notifications you receive,

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here's a list of commands from Twitter.