Communicating about the Event and What to do

PRESENTATION FOR:

NAS – Challenges in Initiating and Conducting Long-Term Health Monitoring of Populations Following Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies in the United States

March 13, 2019

PRESENTED BY:

Jessica Wieder – U.S. EPA, Center for Radiation Information and Outreach

Wieder.jessica@epa.gov

202-343-9201

Trust takes years to build, seconds to break, and forever to repair.

-unknown

Radiation and emotion

Perception of risk

Low Perceived Risk	High Perceived Risk
Voluntary	Involuntary
Under own control	Under control of others
Familiar	Unfamiliar
Personal Benefit	Unknown/No Benefit
Random	Direct
Immediate Effects	Delayed Effects (future generations)
Known Risk	Unknown Risk
Natural Origin	Human Origin

Adapted from V. Covello, P. Sandman, 2001

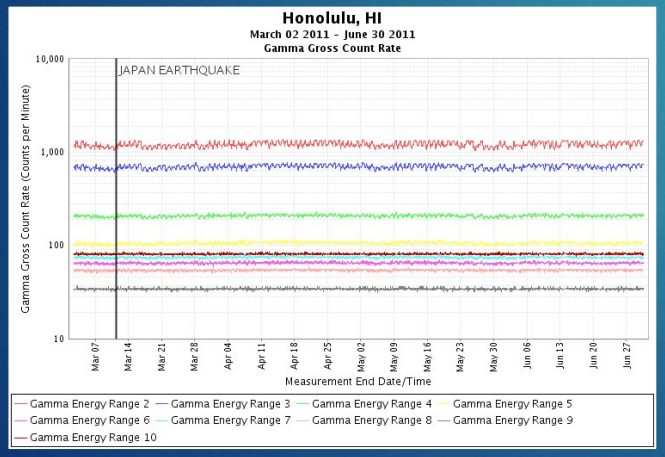
"A brilliant scientific discourse is wasted if no one listens or understands it."

-Journal of the American Medical Association

Communication is more than information.

- “Just the facts” won’t cut it—feelings count!
- Show you understand people’s health concerns.
- In a high-stress situation, your audience will wonder if they can trust you.

Risk communication principles



www.epa.gov/Japan2011

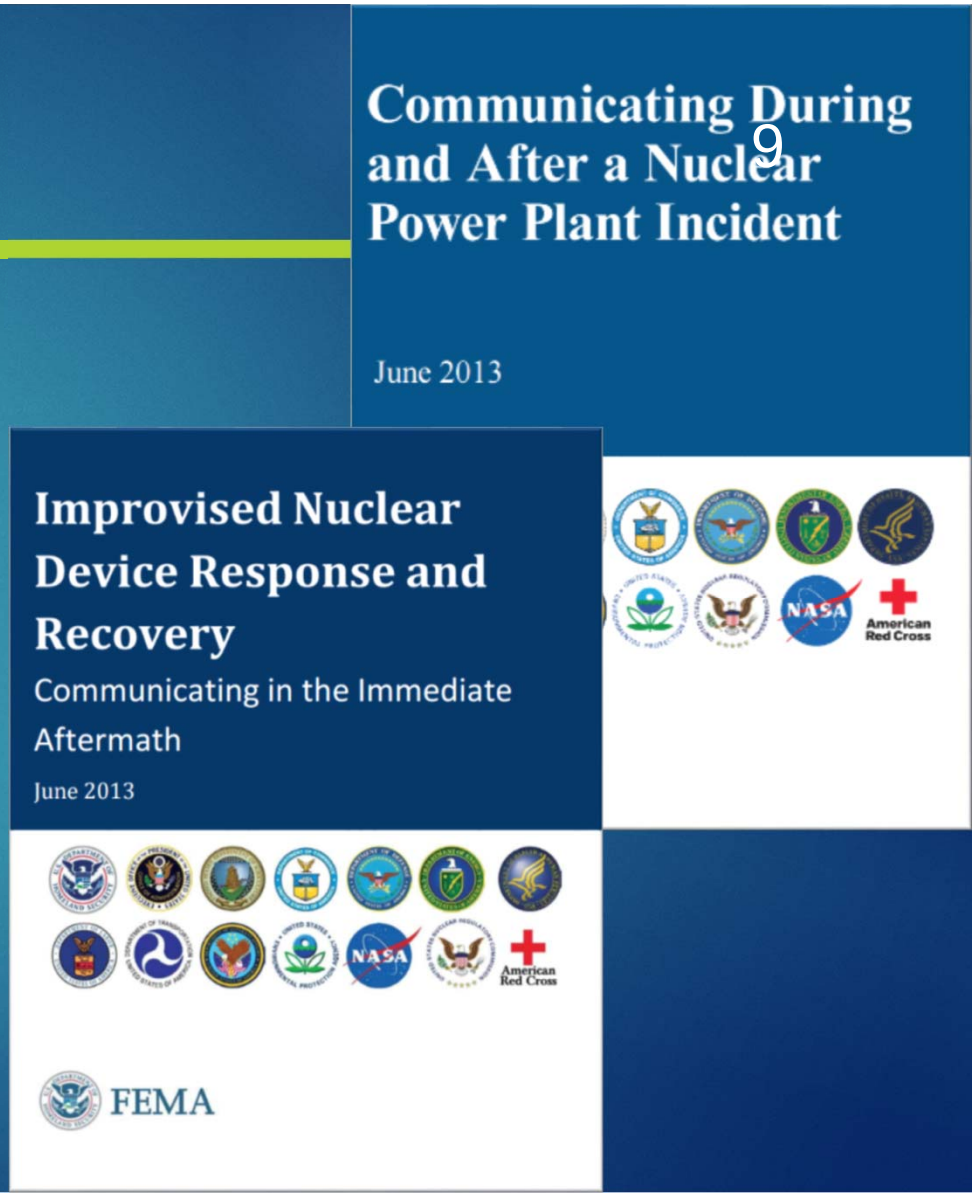
- Explain the risk assessment process before presenting the numbers.
- Define and illustrate the routes of exposure.
- Define units and put data in perspective.
- Explain protective approach to risk assessment and standard setting.

Lessons learned from Fukushima & testing

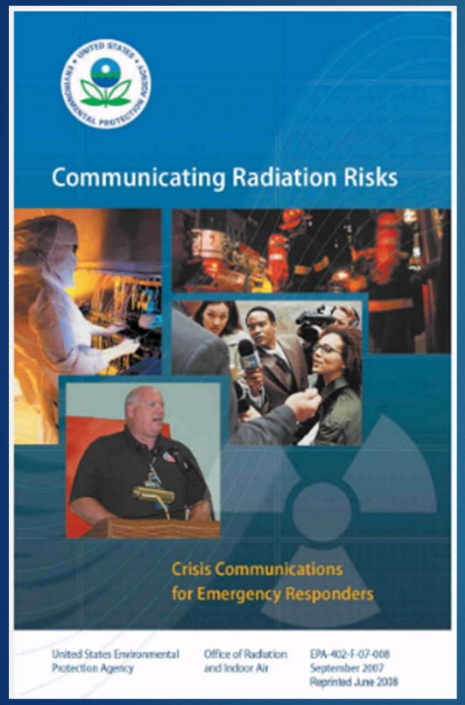
- Be careful with comparisons.
- Don’t be too repetitive.
- Check for contradictory statements.
- Provide prioritized or staged instructions.

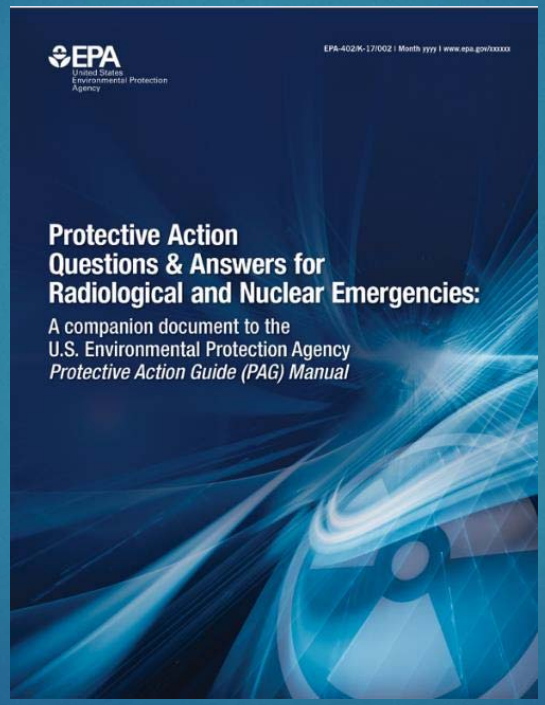
Pre-scripted Messages

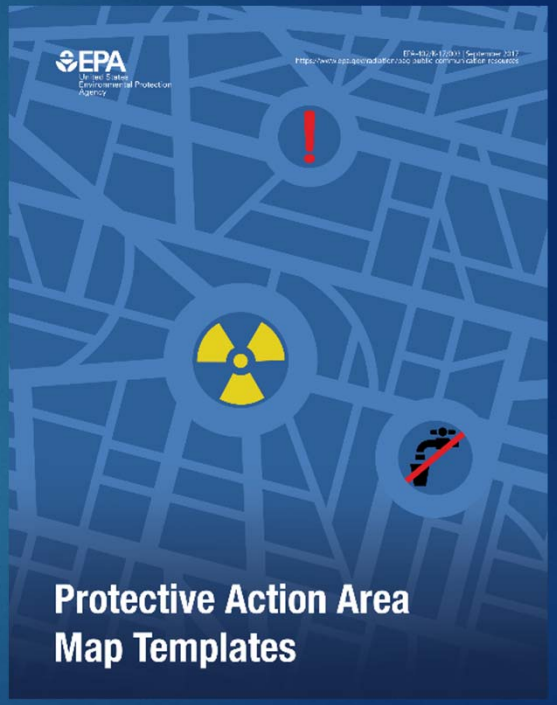
- ~90 questions and answers in each document
- Agreed upon by 14 federal agencies
- Posted publicly on the internet
- A resource for all levels of government



More Pre-scripted Messages







Nuclear Detonation Social Media Messages

Topics include:

- Nuclear Attack Warning
- Immediate Safety Messages
- Decontamination
- Food and Water Guidance
- Medical Needs/Potassium Iodide
- Family and Children Concerns
- Evacuation
- Plume Maps and Fallout

Immediate Notification/Nuclear Attack Warning

IPAWS Compatible: People in LOCATION: BALLISTIC MISSILE ALERT-Get inside, stay inside, stay tuned for info (88)

If you are near LOCATION: get inside a basement or central room of any nearby building, away from windows and doors, stay inside, stay tuned for more information. CDC WHERE TO GO GRAPHIC (162)

If you are in a car, seek shelter in the nearest building. If no buildings nearby, pull to the side of the road, under an overpass if possible. (143)

In the event of a bright flash of light, duck down for at least 30 seconds to avoid injury from flying debris. (110)

If you are near LOCATION: get inside a basement or central room of any nearby building, stay inside, stay tuned for more information. Do not leave your shelter unless officials provide other instructions or your shelter is threatened by fire or collapse. CDC WHERE TO GO GRAPHIC (254)

Immediate Safety Messages

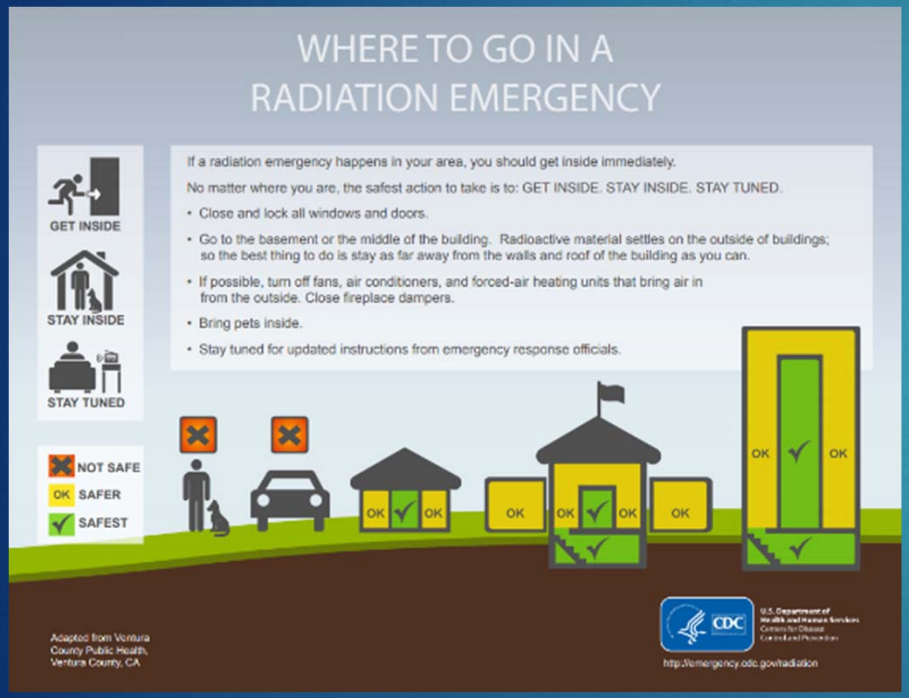
IPAWS Compatible: Get inside, stay inside, stay tuned. This instruction can save your life. (74)

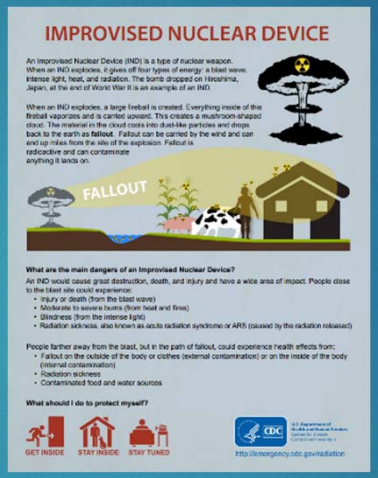
People in LOCATION: a NUCLEAR EVENT has occurred. To protect yourself and your family: get inside, stay inside, stay tuned for more information. Follow instructions from officials-this can save your life. CDC WHERE TO GO GRAPHIC (206)

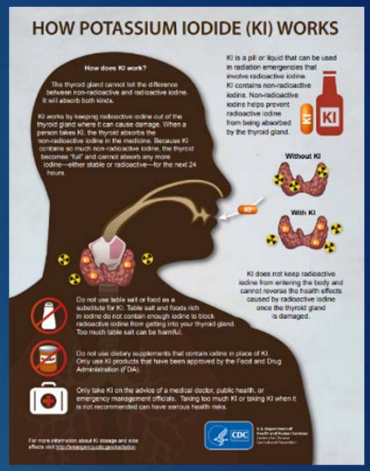
If you are near LOCATION: get inside a basement or central room of any nearby building, stay inside, stay tuned for more information. Do not leave your shelter unless officials provide other instructions or your shelter is threatened by fire or collapse. CDC WHERE TO GO GRAPHIC (254)

People in LOCATION: a NUCLEAR EVENT has occurred. Get inside a basement or central room of any nearby building, stay inside, and stay tuned. Check @HANDLE @HANDLE

Infographics: Translated into 12 Languages



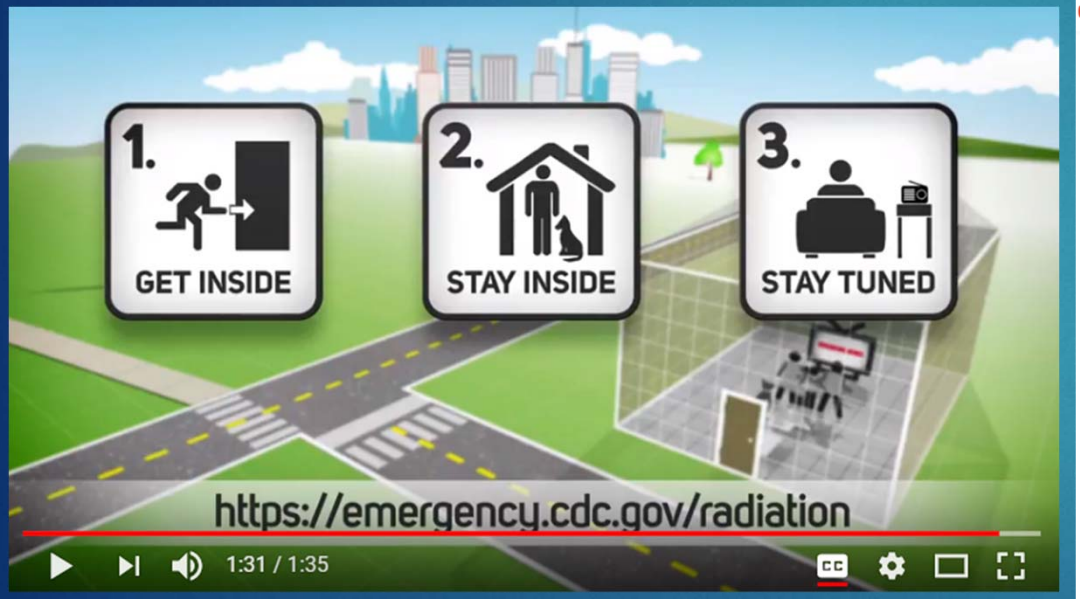




https://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation/resourcelibrary/infographics.asp

Videos

How to Protect Yourself in a Radiation Emergency



Example question & answer

Q.45 How and why are you tracking people who have been exposed to radiation and radioactive material?

- Your local officials will set up community reception centers to check people for contamination with radioactive material and assist them with needed services and enter them into a registry {if indicated} for tracking and follow-up.
- The registry permits follow-up with people who need immediate health care and enables long-term monitoring for individuals who have been exposed to radiation.

From Communicating During and After a Nuclear Power Plant Incident, page 32

The Tools are Publicly Available

https://www.epa.gov/radiation/pag-public-communication-resources

How to Communicate with Individuals