

Delivering a Message to the Community

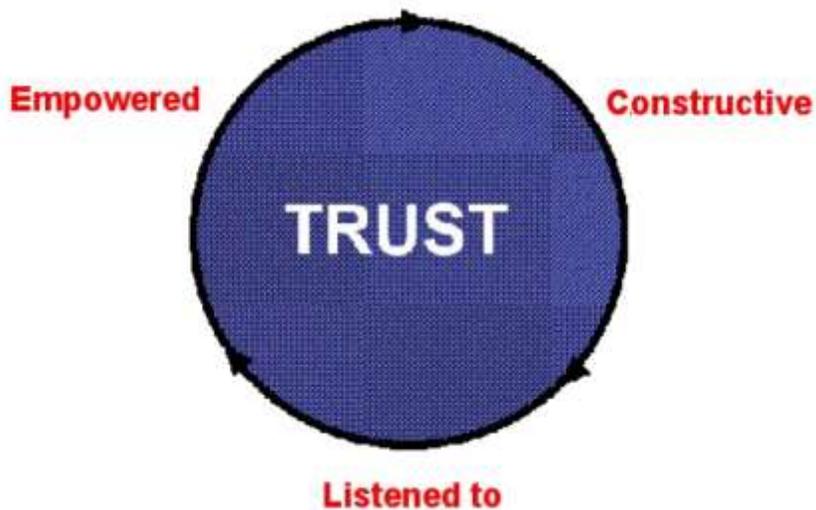
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Center for Public Environmental Oversight
NEWMOA: Communicating Risk to the Public
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**Community Engagement:
The Flip Side of “Risk
Communication”**

The public is diverse.

- Some are worried about property values.
- People are concerned about the health of children.
- Few pay attention to the numbers.
- Trust is central.



Trust Factors

- History
- Demographics
- Transparency
- Respect
- Language

Risk comparisons rarely influence perceptions of risk.

The Substance of Risk Communication

- Failure to notify builds mistrust.
- Effort counts.
- Exceeding protective standards doesn't mean people will get sick.
- “Added risk” vs. causality
- No pathway, no risk

Future pathways

- Engineering controls
 - Alternate water
 - Vapor mitigation
 - Clean fill
- Institutional controls
 - Proprietary
 - Governmental
 - Public oversight (based on knowledge)

Getting the Message Across

- Speak in everyday language.
- Repetition may be necessary.
- Interactive formats allow one to determine whether people are “getting it.”
- Comfortable settings help.

Need for two numbers

- Regulatory standard based upon exposure levels to protect almost everyone.
- Level at which an average person may be affected.

Re-Openers

- Such as TCE standard for cancer and developmental risk
- Many people expect standards to become more protective.
- Few people (receptors) blame agencies for re-opening cases.
- Some people want background or zero.
- Some people want the protection that other communities are getting.

Personal Risk Management

- Is a right.
- May not appear to be based on science.
- May turn out to be the right thing in the long run.

Message from Googler mother

hi Lenny

Thanks so much for your information and your help....

I have one more question - the levels that were found to exceed allowable amts in two of our buildings - Do you know how long the levels were at the 6.4 and 7.8? and what were the times of exposure?

There are lot of pregnant women in the building and I'd like to share the info.

Thanks!

Vapor Intrusion Role-Playing Exercises

- First contact with residents
- Reporting sampling data to residents
- Community meeting

2 hour 20 minute video
available at

[http://new.livestream.com/
mediaartssd/AEHS-EPA](http://new.livestream.com/mediaartssd/AEHS-EPA)

Lessons Learned

- There's a lot to explain in very little time.
- It's difficult to describe vapor intrusion responses in plain English.
- People have questions (health, property values) that regulators are not prepared to answer.
- Plans for re-visiting sites are not clear.
- People are frustrated by the length of time it normally takes to provide sampling results.

E-mail me or give me your card if you want
to join CPEO's free *Brownfields Internet
Forum* and/or *Military Environmental
Forum* newsgroup.

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