

BEST PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE RISK COMMUNICATION

- 1 Risk and crisis communication is an ongoing process**
 - *Incorporate risk communication into the policy development process*
 - *Continuously evaluate and update crisis communication plans*
- 2 Conduct pre-event planning and preparedness activities**
 - *Address existing, emerging and anticipated issues*
 - *Determine how to reduce risk, plan an initial response, update regularly*
 - *Conduct practice exercises and drills*
- 3 Foster partnerships with public**
 - *Identify your “publics”*
 - *Build positive relationships with key publics before a crisis occurs*
 - *Publics could include consumer groups, racial and ethnic communities, stakeholders, etc.*
- 4 Collaborate and coordinate with credible sources**
 - *Establish strategic relationships and networks before a crisis*
 - *Identify subject area experts*
- 5 Meet the needs of media and remain accessible**
 - *Recognize that the media is the primary channel to the public*
 - *Participate in media training*
 - *Remember that the media is not the enemy...*
- 6 Listen to public’s concerns and understand audience**
 - *Respond to the public’s beliefs whether or not they are accurate*
 - *Monitor a full range of communication formats: hotlines, letters to the editor, radio talk shows, public forums, blogs, etc.*
- 7 Communicate with compassion, concern and empathy**
 - *Enhances credibility and perceived legitimacy*
 - *These characteristics do not preclude professionalism*
- 8 Demonstrate honesty, candor and openness**
 - *Without openness, the public will seek information from less accurate sources*
 - *Recognize that situation involves risk sharing*
- 9 Accept uncertainty and ambiguity**
 - *Acknowledge inherent uncertainty of crisis and risk*
 - *Assure that accurate and reliable information will be shared as soon as it is available*
- 10 Give people meaningful actions to do (self-efficacy)**
 - *Helps restore sense of control over an uncertain and threatening situation*
 - *Present as must do... should do... could do...*