

Appendix D—Examples of Communication Channels

Some of the many communication channels available to you include:

Public notices, Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Public notices and PSAs can be used to announce upcoming meetings, availability of documents for review, etc. When used with mass media such as local papers and radio stations, they can be a very effective way of notifying a large number of people in a very short time frame.

Information repositories and libraries

When utilized, information repositories should be centrally located in an area accessible to the majority of your stakeholders. Typically, public buildings such as local government offices or libraries make excellent information repositories as they are open during regular business hours and are easily accessible to everyone (including those with disabilities).

Fact sheets, brochures, newsletters

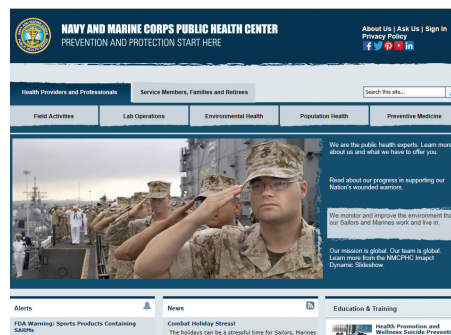
Written materials are very popular methods for conveying key messages to your stakeholders. Site- and topic-specific fact sheets, brochures and newsletters can be quickly developed to meet emergent informational needs and can easily be included in regular mailings or as additional layers of information at meetings.

Executive summaries of technical reports

Many technical reports, environment, safety and health studies, and research papers are lengthy, complicated and highly technical. Although these types of documents may be very important to your issue or project, they are typically not written in a manner that most stakeholders can easily understand. Often an executive summary needs to be written so that all readers, regardless of their technical knowledge, can understand the contents of the document, and the relevance of key findings and recommendations. (See the Appendix E, “A Guide to Writing an Effective Executive Summary” for additional detailed information).

Internet-based capabilities

Internet-based capabilities such as websites, social media, and discussion forums provide alternatives to traditional media such as television and newspapers. These sites and technologies are a rapidly expanding communication channel for getting your message out to stakeholders that routinely access these sites. Be sure to coordinate with your local public affairs personnel to ensure compliance with existing DoD policies for use of such resources (See the Appendix F, “Navy Command Social Media Handbook”).



Info lines, phone calls

Having an info line is often an effective way to answer stakeholder questions in real time. If you select this type of communication channel, be sure to provide sufficient resources to staff the call center and return all messages when they are left after hours.

News media, press releases, articles

When used properly, traditional media resources are also good communication channels to get information to your stakeholders. Before agreeing to interviews or coordinating with the media, be sure to contact your local public affairs office for guidance. Public affairs personnel are specially trained and can provide the expertise necessary to ensure your media communication channels are used effectively and in full compliance with DoD policy.



Site tours

If logistically feasible, site tours can also be a very effective tool for providing information to your stakeholders. In cases where “seeing the site” can provide critical information to key stakeholders and decision makers, this option should be evaluated. Be sure that the site guide or spokesperson selected is well-versed in your key messages and is prepared to deliver them as an integral part of the tour.

Site- and Topic-specific videos

Although videos can be expensive to develop, they can also be very effective, particularly if a large number of stakeholders need to understand difficult concepts or principles in order to make informed decisions. Such videos also have significant economy of scale when they can be used at multiple sites for a common issue or problem. To illustrate this point, many Navy and Marine Corps bases are currently involved in “vapor intrusion” studies where volatile chemicals may move from contaminated soil or groundwater into occupied buildings. Since vapor intrusion is a fairly new issue and multiple sites across the country are affected, a large number of stakeholders are unfamiliar with the issue. To quickly fill this information gap, the Navy developed a short, easy-to-understand video to explain the concept of vapor intrusion to the general public. This video has been used at multiple vapor intrusion sites across the U.S. and has proven to be an efficient and cost-effective communication tool for quickly explaining new concepts to a large and diverse number of stakeholders.



Screen captures from “Understanding Vapor Intrusion: A Guide to Key Concepts and Principles.”
To view the video online, go to http://www.nmcphc.med.navy.mil/Environmental_Health/riskcom_materials.aspx

Meetings (one-on-one, small group, public)

Meetings can be very effective tools to convey information to your stakeholders. One-on-one meetings with key stakeholders are invaluable and time well spent, especially when they can export your key messages to their many constituents. Small group meetings are also effective and can easily be tailored to meet the needs (and schedule) of the group. Public meetings are used routinely with great success by Navy and Marine Corps installations to provide regular updates, highlight progress or simply to provide general information. Because they are the preferred format for conveying large amounts of information, they are discussed in more detail in Appendix G, “Navy and Marine Corps Guide to Public Meetings”.

