Improving national risk and crisis communications
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The UK Context

The duty to communicate with the public:

- Duty on emergency responders to make the public aware of the risks of emergencies and how emergency responders are prepared to deal with them

- To maintain arrangements to warn the public that an emergency has occurred, or is about to occur.
Communicating with the public

1st part of the duty to communicate

Pre-event

Public Awareness
Risk Communication
and Education

2nd part of the duty to communicate

Public Warning
At the time of an incident or when one is likely to occur

Informing and Advising the Public
Immediate and long term post event

2nd part of the duty to communicate
# Strategy for raising risk awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Inform UK resilience planning &amp; strategy</td>
<td>National Risk Assessment and Planning Assumptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency planners</td>
<td>Inform local resilience planning Promote importance of risk assessment</td>
<td>Guidance on risks and planning assumptions and how to locally interpret Implementation of Civil Contingencies Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Inform promotion of sector resilience</td>
<td>Via government departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academics and international partners</td>
<td>Share good practice / knowledge</td>
<td>Via engagement forums / the Chief Scientific Advisors network in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>a) Awareness / education b) Promoting resilience c) Warning and informing</td>
<td>Some direct / some via intermediaries</td>
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</table>
Sources of information

Risk Communication

GOVERNMENT

Industry
Duties under COMAH / REPPIR

Experts

Responders
Duties under the CCA.

Schools

Family/Peers

PUBLIC

Need to consider how to deliver effective risk communication. Tools should include: Education / curriculum; Leaflets; Web based info; TV/media; Social media
Government Communications

Public information on the risks faced and their consequences

Sign-posting to where more detail can be found

Encouraging others to embed this information in their communication strategies

Promotion of the importance of risk management and its benefits

Accessibility, credibility, perception, relevance / interest
Role of Social Media

Allows instant transmission

Can reach a broad range of people – but limits!

Informs decisions & actions

Helps connect people and allows communication with trusted sources

Can support rumour management if used as 2-way tool

Provides an avenue to express support
Role of behavioural science

• We rely on technology but it only works some of the time!

• Also sometimes technology works exactly as planned but people do not behave as expected.

• Technology and traditions need to work together.
Case study 1: Reaching small businesses

Plain Language Guidance

Encouraging “trusted information sources” to disseminate messages

Taking advice to them

Demonstrating the benefits to the audience
Case study 1: Good practice and lessons from Swine Flu

• “Sneezing man” and “catch it, bin it, kill it slogan” produced a clear “brand.”

• Value of the multi-median approach (leaflets, web, TV, online, posters, social media).

• Value you of a “single authoritative voice” & the use of “trusted experts” in briefings

• Value of monitoring public opinions

• Illustrated the challenge of communicating complex information and uncertainty
Case study 2: Lessons from Fukushima

Value of coordinating scientific Views to establish a Commonly Recognised Scientific Picture

Value of mechanisms to quickly Activate the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies

Value of timely communications and media briefings

Importance of understanding risk perception and the social dimension as well as technical solutions