



Communication during the “Golden Hour” – Risk and Crisis Communication Strategies for Dam Safety

April 23, 2020
Full Day Workshop

USSD Committee on Public Safety, Security and Emergency Management and
USSD Young Professionals Committee

Teaching Moment

At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to integrate risk communication best practices into planning efforts and understand how to communicate effectively with internal and external audiences during dam emergencies.

Workshop Description

Using interactive and participatory exercises, this workshop will cover the basics of risk communication, theories of protective action decision-making, and how to communicate protective actions effectively during dam safety incidents. Participants will be introduced to communication strategies for enhancing internal and external emergency information programs using plain language and taking into consideration unique information requirements of dam safety populations. At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to integrate risk communication best practices into planning efforts and understand how to communicate effectively with internal and external audiences during dam emergencies.

Workshop Agenda

I. Dam Safety and Risk in the Public Consciousness – 1 hour

This session presents the basic concepts of understanding and communicating risk. Examples will be shown of public perception of crisis incidents. The importance of dam safety awareness and public education will be reinforced.

II. Identifying and Addressing Inherent Communication Complexities for Dam Populations – 1.5 hours

Participants will be introduced to communication complexities and considerations public affairs personnel should consider when crafting messages during dam emergencies. Case studies will be utilized to reinforce the importance of identifying and addressing communication complexities during such times. Cultural differences, emotional & psychological impact, literacy and community history will be discussed as it pertains to message development and communication strategy.

III. Internal Communication for Risk and Consequence – 1 hour

Best practices for discussing dam emergency and operational risk information with local and state partner organizations. Methodology and strategy for discussing and communicating dam emergency consequence information with stakeholders.

IV. Risk and Crisis Communication Methodology and Strategy for Dam Populations – 2.0 hours

Participants learn and apply focused methodologies and strategies for (1) identifying and addressing target audiences; (2) the importance of considering the literacy levels of your audiences; (3) communication strategies.

V. Risk & Crisis Communication Key Messaging for Dam Populations – 1.5 hours

Participants will gain experience that will help them better prepare to address the media and public on both non-emergency and emergency events involving dams. Focus is on developing key messages and strategies that support public information for dam safety and emergencies, examining tools available for reaching your intended audience, and highlighting processes that aid in ensuring your message hits the mark.

VI. Building and Maintaining a Resilient Joint Information System – 1 hour

Participants will gain experience to assist them in building and maintaining a robust Joint Information System (JIS). Session will stress importance of building and cultivating strong partnerships/relationships with other response agencies before the crisis. Based on NIMS requirements, this session focuses on recruiting for the JIS, building bench strength, elements of mutual aid and assistance, employing emergency management assistance compacts, and key planning capabilities for maintaining a resilient JIS.