Checklist for Risk Communication and Public Involvement Fact Sheets

The following checklist should be considered when developing fact sheets.

Plan your fact sheet

    Know your audience

        Who are you trying to reach?

        What does audience want to know?

    Identify your purpose

        Why do you want to distribute a fact sheet?

        What would you like your audience to know?

Make it easy for people to find the information they want

    Provide answers for the questions people are asking in the right format

        What is happening related to my concerns or issues?

        How does this affect me?

Use understandable text and illustrations

        Keep it as simple as possible

        Cut the jargon out

        Cut down on use of acronyms and define the ones you do use

        Use illustrations instead of tables and charts full of data

        Focus on the big picture – don't use too many details

Use as few numbers as possible. If you need to use numbers, then consider:

        Remember that numbers are not second nature to most people

        Be aware of the numerator effect

        Consider using an analogy to explain small amounts and relate numbers to something familiar (e.g., ppm = 1 inch in 16 miles or ppb = 1 cent in $10,000,000)

        Whole numbers and fractions are better than decimal points

        If you must use a scientific notation, explain it first, then be consistent (10^{-5} vs. 1×10^{-5})

        Explain inverse relationships (e.g., billion > million but ppb < ppm)

Design a visually-appealing and user friendly fact sheet

Use visual illustrations, graphics, and photos as much as possible

Use bullets instead of long paragraphs of text

Break up text by using a question & answer format or by using representative headings

Make it easy for people to provide feedback or request more information

Provide a point of contact

Provide other resources of information