Checklist for Risk Communication and Public Involvement Web Sites

The following checklist should be considered when developing web sites, in general, and specifically when those web sites provide risk communication and public involvement.

Plan your web si te

    Know your audience

        Who are you trying to reach?

        Does your audience use the web?

        What does audience want to see or learn?

        Different communication tools work for different audiences

    Identify your purpose

        Why do you want a web site?

        What do you want visitors to do?

Make it easy for people to find the information they want

    Help people find your web site

        Get the word out and announce your site, include URL on all products

        Register with search engines using the right key words

        Request a link from other web sites

    Easy navigation is a must!

        Next page, back to top, header/side bar

        Site map

        Search capability

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

        What is happening related to my concerns or issues?

        When and where are public meetings?

        How will this affect me?

Design a good web site

    Set tone, keep interest, and connect pages

        Consistent color scheme using the 216-color browser-safe palette

        High contrast: text vs. background color

        Keep consistency between pages

    Fast download time

        Rework graphic so the file size provide a fast download time

        Be wary of the latest Internet gadgets that take long time to download or require users to download plug-ins

Test, test, test...

> Use different platforms and browsers
>
> Ask representatives from your target audience
>
> Connect using a phone line to see how long it takes to view pages

Keep information up-to-date

> Add recent information
>
> Remove old announcements
>
> Check that links work

Provide a way for audience to give feedback and follow up on the feedback

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

> Comment form
>
> Mailto link
>
> Contact us (include mailing address, fax, and phone numbers)
>
> Form to request more specific information or publications order form

Follow up on comments submitted

Web usage statistics

> What pages to people visit and how long do they stay?
>
> What browsers do they use?

Other important considerations

> Web site security
>
> Privacy statements if contact information is collected
>
> Compliance with
>
> > Your organization's policies and procedures
> >
> > Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
>
> Obey web conventions (e.g., only use underlining when text is a link)