Realm of Risk Communication
Module 1 – RC for FRM course

Aug 20, 2012
Hal Cardwell

US Army Corps of Engineers
PLANNING SMART
BUILDING STRONG®
Presentation Outline

- Risk in USACE
- What is RC?
  - Outcomes / Why
  - Contexts of RC
  - Challenges
  - Wide skills needed…Transdisciplinary
- Risk Perception – speaking to audience’s interpretation of risk
The Point

Risk

Managing Risk

Do you have a process?
Did you use your process?

USACE
Risk = \textit{Probability} \times \textit{Consequences}
Risk Management

• Policy and preference based

Risk Assessment

• Analytically based

Risk Communication

• Interactive exchange of information, opinions, and preferences concerning risks
Risk Management

Establish Decision Context

Identify Risks

Analyze Risks

Evaluate Risks

Risk Management Decision

Consult, Communicate and Collaborate

Monitor, Evaluate, Modify

Risk Assessment
Tolerable Risk

- **Unacceptable Region**: Risk cannot be justified except in extraordinary circumstances.
- **Tolerable Region**: People and society are prepared to accept risk in order to secure benefits.
- **Broadly acceptable Region**: Risk regarded as insignificant, further effort to reduce risk not required.

Increasing individual risks and societal concerns.
TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE!

True or False?

- Risk is a measurable and quantifiable characteristic of a thing or event.
- Communities can reach consensus on Tolerable Risk easily.
- Risk Communication helps foster informed decision-making related to risk.
- Risk Communication is not needed when risk is low.
- The purpose of Risk Communication is to inform groups of their level of risk.
Risk Communication Defined

An open, two-way exchange of information and opinion about risk leading to better understanding and better risk management decisions.
Risk Communication …

- Is multi-directional communication among communicators, publics and stakeholders
- Includes activities before, during and after an event
- Considers human perceptions of risk
- Is an integral part of an emergency response plan
- Empowers people to make their own informed decisions
Risk Communication is Not…

- Spin
- Public relations
- Damage control
- Crisis management
- How to write a press release
- How to give a media interview
- Always intended to make people “feel better” or reduce their fear
Risk Communication is …

Trans-Disciplinary

- Environmental Sciences
- Social Psychology
- Philosophy
- Political Science

- Communication
- Engineering
- Economics
- Public Health
- Natural Sciences

Risk Communication is …
a Shared Responsibility
Risk Communication is … a Skill

- One communicator “misfiring” can affect the organization’s mission…And we are all communicators.
- It requires being open, honest, genuine and sincere, and applying (verbal and non-verbal) communication skills in a variety of situations.
- It requires an ongoing commitment to practice and preparation before interacting with publics.
Risk Communication

- Why are we communicating?
- Who is our audience?
- What do our audiences want to know?
- What do we want to get across?
- How will we communicate?
- How will we listen?
- How will we respond?
Risk Communication Outcomes

- Reduce damages
  - Decrease illness, injury & deaths
  - Reduce property and economic losses

- Support response planning
  - Build support for response plan
  - Assist in executing response plan

- Inform decision-making
  - Foster informed decision-making concerning risk
  - Keep decision-makers well informed

- Prevent misallocation & wasting of resources

- Counter or correct rumors
Risk Communication Contexts

- Outrage Management
- Crisis / Emergency Communication
- Public Relations
- Preparedness Response

Outrage (fear, anger) vs. Hazard (danger)
Life-Cycle Risk Management

Preparedness?

Crisis Comm?

Outrage Mgmt?

Outrage Mgmt?

Public Relations?

Preparedness?

State and Local Partnerships

Preparation / Training

Response

Mitigation

Recovery

Event
Tailoring Risk Communication for the Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During a Crisis</th>
<th>Preparedness / Recovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce Outrage</td>
<td>Inform on Potential Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform about Current Crisis &amp; Response</td>
<td>Understand Community Priorities &amp; Preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate individual actions</td>
<td>Motivate Individual action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly 1-way</td>
<td>2-way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During a Crisis</th>
<th>Preparedness / Recovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce Outrage</td>
<td>Inform on Potential Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform about Current Crisis &amp; Response</td>
<td>Understand Community Priorities &amp; Preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate individual actions</td>
<td>Motivate Individual action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly 1-way</td>
<td>2-way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>