

Introduction

This risk communication toolkit is a document intended to be updated regularly by existing and future ITRC teams as significant information, new technology, and additional resources become available for emerging environmental issues and concerns. Potential updates may include additional resources, engagement tools and links to examples and case studies, as well as integrating new section topics to update the risk communication toolkit. The risk communication planning process shown in [Figure 4-1](#) is designed generally to cover a range of current, immediate, and emerging environmental issues and concerns. The initial toolkit version was a collaboration among the following ITRC technical teams:

- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
- 1,4-dioxane
- Harmful Cyanobacterial Blooms (HCBs)

3.1 Caution Statement About Using the Toolkit

Methods and tools presented should be used as guidance to assist practitioners in performing meaningful and effective risk communication. It is essential to choose appropriate and applicable tools that are in alignment with project-specific communication plan goals and objectives ([Section 4.2.1](#)). Environmental issues and concerns could require immediate, short-term, and/or long-term responses. Practitioners should be aware and flexible in their communications planning efforts, particularly in time-critical situations (such as during a cyanobacterial bloom or impacted drinking water supply).

The contents presented are not fill-in-the-blank documents; rather, the text and materials should be used for general reference only. This document should not be construed as definitive guidance for any specific site or project and is not a substitute for consultation with qualified professional advisors to develop project-specific communication plans.

3.2 Risk Communication Toolkit Contents

This toolkit is applicable to current, immediate, and emerging environmental issues and concerns. Examples presented in this toolkit were developed by issue-specific guidance teams but may be applicable to any environmental concern. This risk communication toolkit contains the following elements:

- Risk Communication Plan Description and Template ([Appendix A](#))
- Sample SMART Goals (with PFAS-Specific Example) ([Appendix B](#))
- Audience/Stakeholder Identification Guide (with PFAS Example) ([Appendix C](#))
- Key Message Mapping Guide (with PFAS-Specific Example) ([Appendix D](#))
- Guidance for Writing Press Releases (with PFAS-Specific Examples) ([Appendix E](#))
- Guidance for Writing Analytical Results Letters ([Appendix F](#))
- Social Factors Vision Board (with PFAS-Specific Example) ([Appendix G](#))
- Communication Methods Summary Table ([Appendix H](#))
- Analytical Data Package Public Information Fact Sheet (with PFAS-Specific Example) ([Appendix I](#))
- Tracking Form for Media Correspondence ([Appendix J](#))

The tables presented in the communication plan serve as examples or templates for documenting site-specific activities. [Appendix A](#) presents the record keeping tables for the generic Risk Communication Plan. Subsequent appendices provide issue-specific examples to illustrate and inform practitioners of the risk communication planning process. Users can update the toolkit's planning template and example tools to develop and document a risk communication project that is specific to the site characteristics and community context and needs. For emergency response situations, the user of this document should contact the applicable agency or lead organization's incident management or office of emergency management to determine the short-term risk communication action plan. Going forward, ITRC teams may develop additional examples, case studies, and tools that will be offered for external review with their teams' documents, finalized, and then linked to this risk communication document. As team documents are published, there will be links across the final web documents.