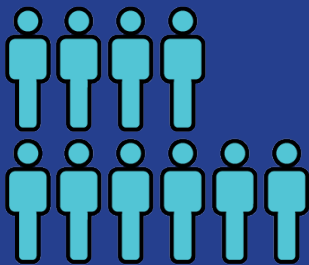




THE BIG PICTURE

Americans would like better access to accurate, high-quality information.

Only 4 in 10



Americans believe there is enough information available to answer their questions about environmental conditions in their communities.



of Americans say they do not have the scientific and technical knowledge to understand environmental problems. Since 2010, the number of Americans who say they know a lot or a fair amount about environmental issues has decreased by 14 percent (73% to 59%).

Sources: GfK Green Gauge US and Roper Reports Worldwide 2013

FEDERAL FACILITY CLEANUP DIALOGUE: SHARING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY

Ensuring that people have environmental information about their communities is a top priority for EPA. Recent public opinion polls show why this is important – many Americans would like better access to accurate, high-quality environmental information. Such information empowers communities by enabling them to participate more fully in the environmental cleanup process. As part of ongoing efforts to enhance community engagement, EPA reached out to diverse stakeholders through several Federal Facility Dialogue meetings to discuss the [federal facility cleanup program](#). During these discussions, stakeholders identified ways to make information on federal facility cleanups more accessible and useful for communities. This fact sheet provides guiding principles and best practices that federal agencies can use to share information more effectively.

Guiding Principles

- **Build on strong foundations.** Community engagement is essential to the cleanup and long-term stewardship of federal facilities and relies on information sharing between federal agencies and the public.
- **Seek input early.** Designing information-sharing tools and methods with diverse user needs and preferences in mind helps ensure their usability and acceptance.
- **Think long term.** Continue to provide information and engage communities even after remedy selection. Statements about the protectiveness of remedies and any follow-up actions should be clearly stated in plain language.
- **Stay in touch.** Sharing timely, useful information shows government transparency in action, increases trust in federal actions and improves agency operations.
- **Prioritize.** Providing access to key information means people will be able to use it more effectively. Priority information often includes the status of site investigations and cleanup, target dates, site features, contaminants of concern, cleanup budget updates, demographic data, and agency points of contact.
- **Be creative.** Using multiple formats (electronic, printed material, in person) means more people will be able to access federal facility records. Formats should be based on the particular needs of affected communities near the federal facility.
- **Rely on innovation.** Social media and other tools and systems should bring federal facility data together from everyone – states, tribes, local governments, communities, federal agencies, others – enhancing information sharing.
- **Evaluate progress.** Regular review of information-sharing strategies and systems makes sure they continue to address evolving needs and integrate new tools.

Additional Information Resources

A Guide to Planning, Implementing, Maintaining, and Enforcing Institutional Controls at Contaminated Sites: <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/policy/ic/guide/Final%20PIME%20Guidance%20December%202012.pdf>

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies on Tribal Consultation: <http://www.epa.gov/tribalportal/pdf/tribal-consultation-memorandum-09.pdf>

EPA Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes: <http://www.epa.gov/tribalportal/pdf/cons-and-coord-with-indian-tribes-policy.pdf>

Best Practices

- *Provide content in a variety of easily understood formats.* Combine text in a layout with maps, tables, graphics and graphs.
- *Avoid technical language and unnecessary acronyms.*
- *Maximize the responsiveness of online resources such as websites.* Provide a place where the public can ask questions, report important information about a federal facility, and provide feedback.
- *Provide a point of contact for all information resources.*
- *Make sure websites are easily searchable by Internet search engines.*
- *Help users get to important information fast.* Limit the number of “clicks” it takes to get to federal facility details.
- *When possible, make website navigation reversible.* Users need to be able to backtrack to previously visited pages.
- *Keep information-sharing systems up to date.* Include the status of investigations and project dates. Websites should note the posting date of the most recent information.
- *Get the word out.* Social media provides a real-time way to share project news and milestones effectively.

Looking Forward

To help ensure effective community outreach and engagement, federal agencies must be able to respond to rapid changes in information-sharing technologies. EPA is leading the way, pursuing a range of activities to make sure environmental information is more accessible and useful to the public.

- The Cleanups at Federal Facilities Resource Directory provides users with direct online access to the most relevant federal facilities content, using a single navigation page: <http://www2.epa.gov/fedfac>.
- An E-Docket tool enables electronic management of federal facility records, paving the way for greater information sharing with the public as well as other federal agencies.
- Regular updates on Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites share the latest federal facility news.
- Site profile pages on EPA's website provide easier access to updated federal facility content.
- An interagency work group is focused on streamlining Five-Year Review reports and making them more useful to the public. Training materials for site managers and community outreach materials show communities how to use the reports as valuable information resources: <http://www2.epa.gov/fedfac/five-year-review-federal-facility-cleanups>.

THE BIG PICTURE (cont.)



Americans increasingly rely on online sources such as newspapers, magazines and blogs for environmental information.



Information sharing today is briefer and more visual and aesthetically pleasing. This trend is reflected in the rise of visual social media, how consumers use technology and in the increased use of infographics.

Sources: GfK Green Gauge US and Roper Reports Worldwide 2013

BACKGROUND

Information in this fact sheet comes from two Federal Facility Cleanup Dialogue stakeholder meetings and an Information-Sharing Webinar hosted by EPA.

At the meetings, participants shared suggestions for strengthening stakeholder involvement in the Federal Facility Cleanup Program. They also discussed the importance of making information more accessible and useful for community members, particularly during the long-term phase of cleanup at federal facilities. Representatives from tribal, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations, citizen advisory boards, and communities participated.

Federal agencies joining EPA for the Webinar included the Departments of Defense, Energy and Interior.

To learn more about federal facilities and the Dialogue meetings, visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/fedfac>.