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Project newsletters and reports

Project newsletters and reports include speeches, panel discussions, videos, or slide shows held for local clubs, civic or religious organizations, school classes, or concerned community groups to help improve public understanding of current RCRA activities. Project newsletters and reports may be broadcast online via a webinar or posted to agency or facility websites or social media accounts.

Required activity?

No.

EPA's public participation guidelines for the use of project newsletters and reports are mentioned briefly in Chapters 4 and 5 of the 2016 Edition of the RCRA Public Participation Manual.

Making It Work

When to Use

Project newsletters and reports are particularly useful when there is moderate-to-high interest in a facility or when the project reaches a major milestone in the RCRA process. In addition, consider giving project updates, newsletters, and reports when short descriptions of RCRA information can be integrated into meetings on other subjects.

Because project newsletters and reports are delivered in person, the audience has an opportunity to ask questions, and the presenter can gauge individuals' concerns. Project newsletters and reports also provide an opportunity to provide information to many people at one time, reducing the number of individual inquiries to the agency and facility. Making project staff available to present helps to signal the organization's interest in the community.

Project newsletters and reports require substantial effort to be effective. A poorly planned presentation can distort community members' views of the site and situation. It can be useful to distribute ***Fact Sheets*** or other handouts for participants to refer to during and after the presentation, and incorporate Exhibits that will hold the audience's attention and aid in their understanding of the material. After the presentation, hold a ***Question and Answer*** (Q&A) session to help clarify information and address complex issues in more detail.

How to Use

- **Initial Outreach:** Contact groups that may be interested in learning about the project to determine their interests, current level of awareness, and specific concerns so that these can become the focus of the presentation.
- **Scheduling:** Schedule the presentation at a time that is convenient for most members of the target audience. For example, if stakeholders are unable to attend during business hours, the presentation could be scheduled for an evening or weekend. Project newsletters and reports can also occur as part of a regular meeting of another stakeholder group. Consult with the target audience to find an appropriate time. Allow one to two days to set up, schedule, and prepare the presentation, and follow up on any issues raised. Be sure to allow additional time to arrange audiovisual equipment.
- **Announce event:** Announce the presentation through the media (e.g., newspapers, radio, websites, and social media) and in the Agency's publications and websites.

- **Format:** Select a format for the presentation, being sure to adjust the tone and technical complexity of the material to suit the audience's needs. A standard presentation format is:
  - Introduce the speaker, the organization, the RCRA permitting or corrective action process, and the facility.
  - Describe the issues likely to affect the audience.
  - Discuss what actions are currently being taken.
  - Discuss how individuals can participate in the decision-making process.
- **Time:** Set a time limit for the presentation. Consider having several staff members present short segments of the presentation. Allow time for a question-and-answer session following the presentation.
- **Supporting materials:** Select supporting materials (e.g., graphics, exhibits) that will hold the audience's attention but not distract from the speaker's message. Rehearse as much as possible and conduct a trial run in front of colleagues.
- **Further information:** If substantive issues or technical details cannot be addressed in the time allotted for the presentation, identify a contact person who can provide further information.

Checklist for Project Newsletters and Reports

- ❐ Contact stakeholder groups regarding presentation topics in which they may be interested.
- ❐ Determine message(s) to be presented based on stated community interests and concerns.
- ❐ Prepare presentation, including handout materials, exhibits, or other visual materials.
- ❐ Determine which staff members will give the presentation or attend the question-and-answer session.
- ❐ Schedule presentation.
  - Consider organizing a webinar for stakeholders who cannot attend in person.
- ❐ Conduct rehearsals.
- ❐ Conduct presentation and question-and-answer session.
- ❐ Following the presentation, respond to any questions that the presenter was unable to answer.
- ❐ Consider posting the presentation to relevant websites or social media accounts.