Air Quality Outreach Materials

Air Quality Communication Workshop
San Salvador, El Salvador
April 16-17, 2012
Who Uses Air Quality Information?

• Public:
  – Make decisions about reducing exposure to atmospheric pollutants
  – Take action to reduce pollutant emissions

• Media:
  – Publicize air quality events
  – Provide general information on air quality and health

• Government Officials:
  – Make decisions about protecting public health
  – Communicate health messages
  – Develop regulations to reduce pollutant emissions
Communicating Air Quality Information

• Air quality information should be clear, concise, and consistent
• Use the AQI to communicate pollutant concentrations
• Use non-technical terms for clear understanding
• Make health messages concise and direct
• Standardize health messages and tips for consistency
• Educate the public, media, and government officials on air quality issues so they are prepared when events occur
Common Questions from the Media

• What is air quality?
• Why is air quality important?
• How does air quality affect people?
• What are the common pollutants in our area?
• Where can the media find air quality information?
• What can people do to protect their health during an air quality event?
• Are air quality measurements accurate?
• How should the media communicate air quality information to the public?
• What can people do to reduce air pollution?
Common Questions from Government Officials

• What are the health effects of exposure to particle pollution?
  – Chronic (long-term) exposure (e.g., years)
  – Acute (short-term) exposure (e.g., hours to days)

• Who is at risk from exposure to particle pollution?

• What can people do to protect themselves when particle pollution is high?

• What can people do to reduce particle pollution...
  – every day?
  – when PM concentrations are high?

• Where can people find particle pollution concentrations for our city/country?
Working with the Government and Media

• Establish a relationship:
  – Visit government officials and travel to media outlets (e.g., TV stations, newspapers)
  – Provide information in advance of air quality events
  – Be proactive

• Provide materials for communicating air quality information that are:
  – Easy-to-use
  – Customized
  – Informative

• Make air quality information relevant to current events, interests, etc.
Air Quality Outreach Materials

• Create and distribute a variety of outreach materials

• Choose appropriate materials based on:
  – Cost
  – Usability
  – Longevity
  – Target market
  – Production time
  – Need for internet
  – Amount of time viewers will have to see it
  – Method of distribution

• Offer a range of materials
  – Not everyone learns in the same way
  – Different materials will reach different audiences
Contents of Published Materials

• Explain why air quality information is important (i.e., how pollution affects the public)
• Sources of air pollution
• Ways the public can change their behavior to reduce emissions
• Clear, practical health tips
• Simple, standardized health messages
Posters

Advantages:

• Visually interesting
• Contain a lot of information
• Can be placed on buses, on trains, in health clinics, and in public service offices

Disadvantages:

• Reach a relatively limited audience
• Take time to produce
Flyers

Advantages:

• Small enough to hand out at community events
• Relatively inexpensive and easy to produce

Disadvantages:

• Reach a very limited audience
Video/TV

Advantages:

• Engaging and visual
• Reach a large audience

Disadvantages:

• Can be expensive to produce and run on TV
• Require considerable production time

Example of air quality video
Radio

Advantages:
• Inexpensive to produce
• Reach a large audience

Disadvantages:
• No visual component

Example of air quality radio announcement
Billboards

Advantages:

• Reach a large audience, including those without television and radio access

Disadvantages:

• May be expensive to produce
Outreach Materials on MARN Website

www.servirglobal.net

Presentations from the Air Quality Communication Workshop
April 16-17, 2012

Case Studies of Air Quality Events

Sample Air Quality Outreach Materials
Methods of Reaching the Public

• Media
  – Television/radio/newspapers
  – News anchors and weathercasters

• Events
  – Distribute flyers and other print materials
  – Improve awareness through outreach activities

• Schools
  – Children as a group are particularly sensitive to air pollution
  – Children are likely to share what they learn with their parents

• City/national/regional websites
SIMAT Website Children’s Section (Mexico City)

http://www.calidadaire.df.gob.mx/calidadaire/teporingo/
Summary

• There are a variety of different types of people who use air quality information, and they use the information for different purposes
• Air quality information disseminated to users should be clear, concise, and consistent
• Education is key to public understanding
• Involve the media to educate the public and government officials
• Use a variety of different outreach materials for education and data dissemination:
  – Posters, flyers, billboards
  – Television and radio
  – Websites