

# CENTER FOR NUCLEAR WASTE REGULATORY ANALYSES

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## TRIP REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Attend the Short Course "The Risk Communication Challenge"

**DATE/PLACE:** May 11–13, 2005, Boston, Massachusetts

**AUTHORS:** Miriam R. Juckett

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**DATE/PLACE:** May 11–13 2005, Boston, Massachusetts  
**AUTHOR:** Miriam R. Juckett  
**PERSONS PRESENT:** Approximately fifty international participants (primarily US and Canadian) attended the course, primarily from the Communications sector.

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF TRIP:**

The Harvard School of Public Health annually holds a short course entitled "The Risk Communication Challenge." The course covers the fundamentals of communicating information to the public and drafting messages in a clear, effective way. Center and NRC staff have previously attended this course to enhance our communications abilities, particularly in the area of Public Outreach and other stakeholder interactions. M. Juckett attended this course for training as the new Principal Investigator for Public Outreach.

### **SUMMARY OF PERTINENT POINTS AND ACTIVITIES:**

The course was held over three days with several speakers giving oral presentations and lectures. Topics included: fundamentals of risk communication, real-life examples of risk communications, risk perception, the importance of trust, audience responses, effective communication strategies, etc. Discussion was encouraged during the lectures, and due to the diversity of class participants, a wide range of viewpoints were represented. A large group activity was conducted in which a mock press release was prepared. See attached agenda for additional information on the course.

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

The course was beneficial and informative, and helped prepare attendees for risk communications activities and stakeholder interactions.

### **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:**

None.


### **PENDING ACTIONS:**

None.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

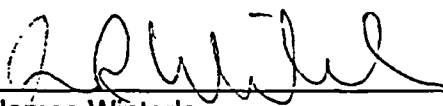
This course is highly recommended for staff involved in public outreach or stakeholder interactions.

**SIGNATURES:**

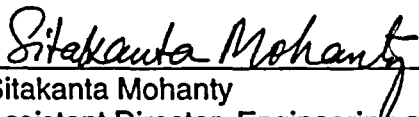
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Miriam Juckett  
Scientist

6-8-05  
Date

**CONCURRENCE:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James Winterle  
Manager, Performance Assessment

6-8-05  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sitakanta Mohanty  
Assistant Director, Engineering and System  
Assessment

6/9/2005  
Date



HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
CENTER FOR RISK ANALYSIS AND THE  
CENTER FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

THE RISK COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE  
MAY 11 – 13, 2005

DAILY AGENDA

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MAY 11, 2005

- 8:00 – 9:00am      Registration
- 9:00 – 9:15am      **Welcome, Introductions and Program Overview**  
*George M. Gray, PhD*  
*Executive Director*  
*Center for Risk Analysis*  
*Harvard School of Public Health*
- 9:15 – 10:45am    **Risk Perception I**  
*David P. Ropeik, MS*  
*Director of Risk Communication*  
*Center for Risk Analysis*  
*Harvard School of Public Health*
- 10:45 – 11:00am    Refreshment Break
- 11:00 – 12:30pm    **Risk Perception II**  
*David P. Ropeik, MS*
- 12:30 – 1:30pm     Lunch
- 1:30 – 3:00pm      **The Importance of Trust in Understanding Risk Communication**  
*Ragnar E. Lofstedt, PhD*  
*Professor and Director*  
*King's Centre for Risk Management*  
*King's College, London*
- 3:00 – 3:30pm      Refreshment Break
- 3:30 – 5:00pm      **Confronting BSE – A Risk Communication Case Study**  
*George M. Gray, PhD*



DAILY AGENDA

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MAY 12, 2005

- 8:30 – 9:00 am Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 – 10:30am **Reporting on Risk: How the Media Think**  
*David P. Ropeik, MS*
- 10:30 – 11:00am Refreshment Break
- 11:00 – 12:30pm **Acrylamide in Food**  
*Ragnar E. Lofstedt, PhD*
- 12:30 – 1:45pm Lunch
- 1:45 – 3:15pm **Communicating Risk in a Crisis**  
*Karen Doyne*  
*Managing Director, Crisis & Issues Management*  
*Burson-Marsteller*
- 3:15 – 3:30pm Refreshment Break
- 3:30 – 5:00pm **Communicating Uncertain Science:  
The US CPSC and Pthalates in Children's Toys**  
*George M. Gray, PhD*
- 6:00 – 7:00 pm Reception

MAY 13, 2005

- 8:30 – 9:00 am Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 – 10:30am **The Mental Models Approach to Risk Communication**  
*Sarah Thorne, MA*  
*President and Partner*  
*Thorne Butte: Decision Partners, Inc.*
- 10:30 – 10:45am Refreshment Break
- 10:45 – 12:15pm **Improving Risk Communication: The Hillside School**  
*David P. Ropeik, MS*
- 12:15pm Adjourn