

Communication with the Public

IAEA-KINS Workshop on the Emergency Preparedness and
Response to Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies

19 - 23 June 2023, Daejeon, Republic of Korea

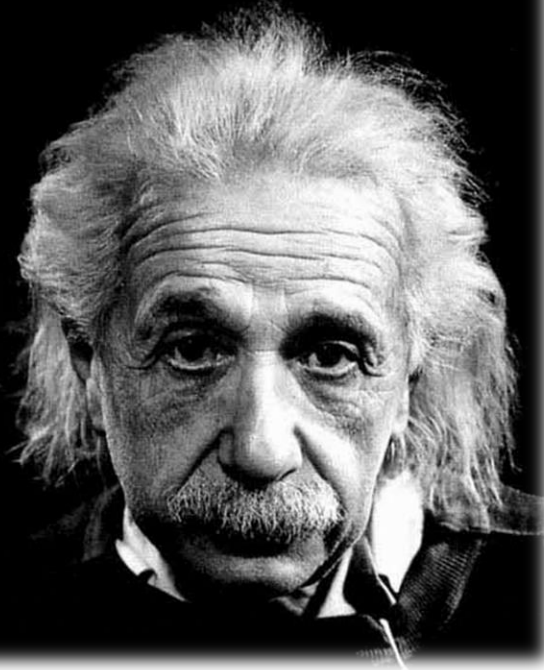
Introduction

- Requirement 13: *“The government shall ensure that arrangements are in place for communicating with the public throughout a nuclear or radiological emergency.”*

Simple

“Everything should be made
as simple as possible,
but not simpler.”

Albert Einstein



Challenge

- Communicating with the public about radiation is challenging
- **Communicate in plain language**
- You will communicate better with people if you can think as they are thinking

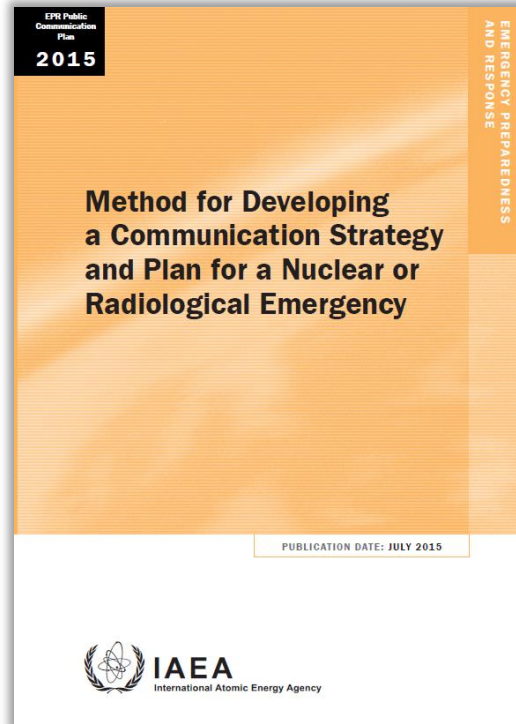
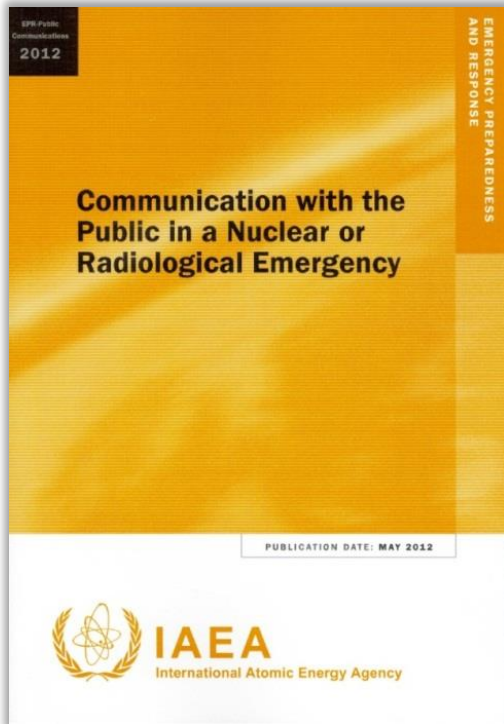


Objectives of Emergency Public Communications

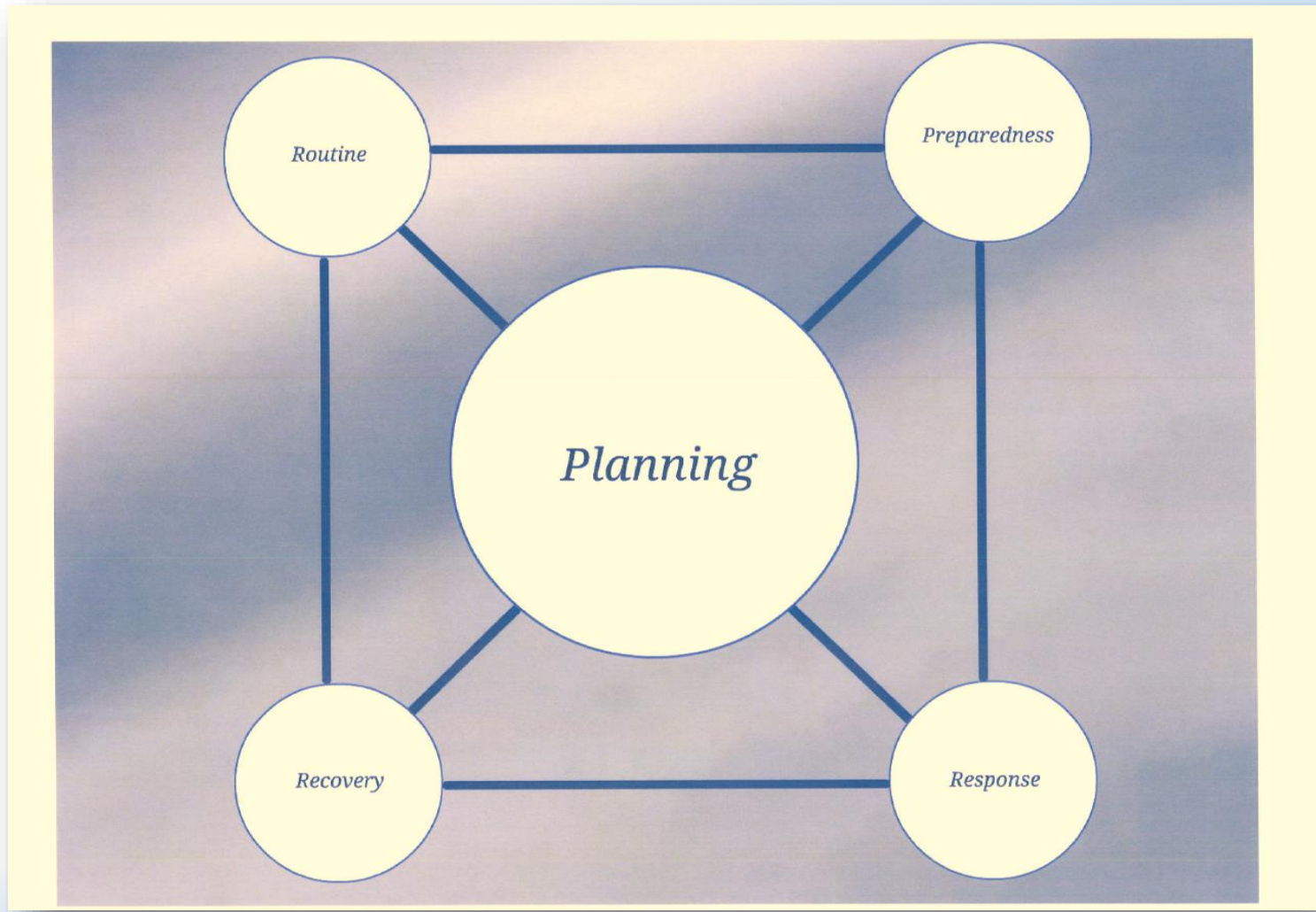
- Effectively implement protective actions
- Mitigate consequences of fear and psychological effects of radiation emergencies



EPR-Series Guidance



Public Communications Planning



Sources of Information

- Within the organization
- Other organizations
- Media
- Online information and opinion sources
- General public



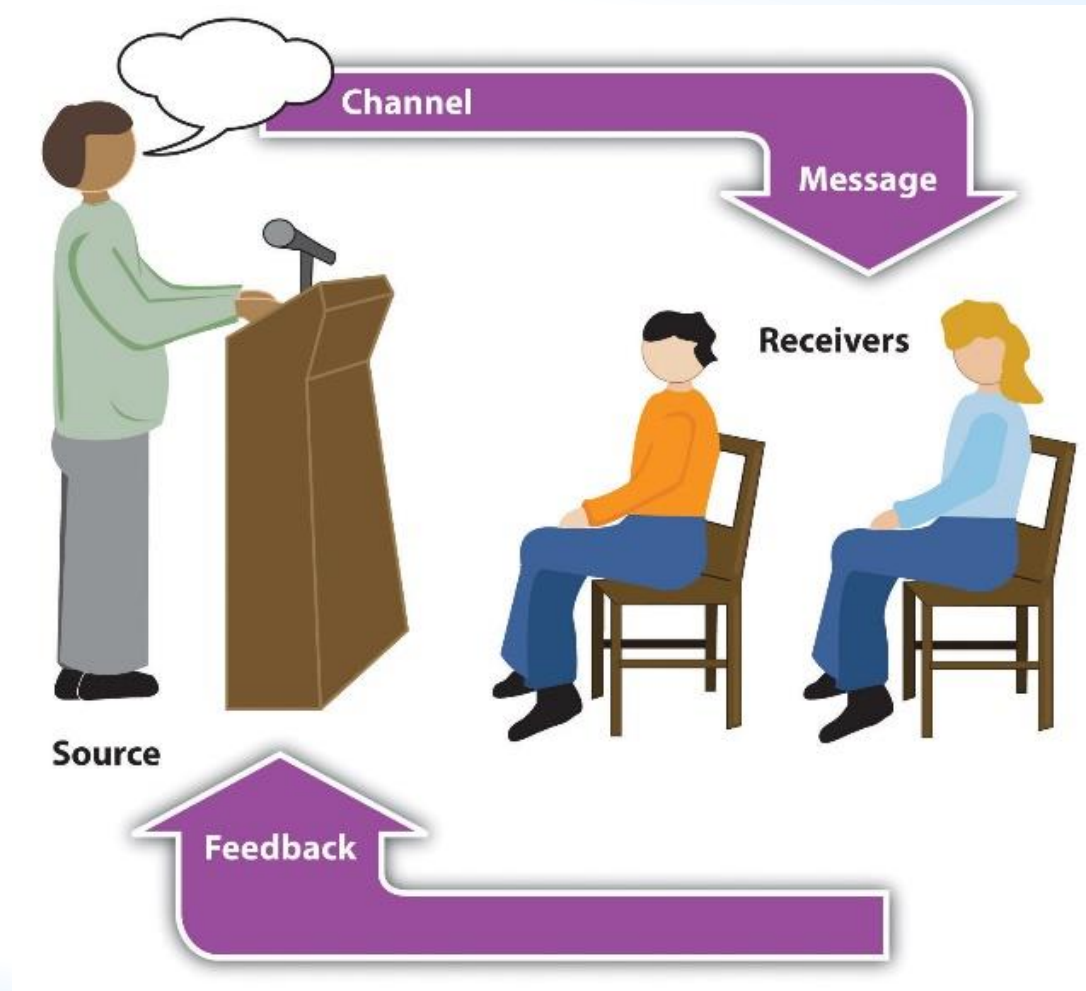
Audiences and Channels

- Identify audiences and engage them in preparedness phase
- Identify communication channels
 - Controlled
 - Uncontrolled



Messages

- Transparent
- Timely
- Objective
- Factual
- Relevant
- Accurate
- Clear
- Credible



Messages (cont.)

Sample Holding Statement

(For use before specific information is available):

Date: [date of issue]

Time: [time of issue]

[News Release Number]

[Organization name] confirms that it has received a report of [nature of event]. According to the information received at this time, the [event] occurred at [time and location]. Reports indicate that [any confirmed information on the event] and that [any initial measures] measures are being taken to protect [the public, responders, products, trade, or specify as appropriate]. The [specify plan as appropriate] emergency plan has now been activated [and we have activated our public information centre].

[Organization name] is coordinating its activities with responders now at the scene and other involved agencies [specify as appropriate]. We will be providing further information as soon as it becomes available. [Provide details on timing of any updates or briefings]. The next [briefing/update] will take place at [location and/or time].

For further information:

Name [name of contact for the media]:

Title [title of media contact]:

Organization:

Telephone:

Mobile:

Email:

Website:

Effective Public Communications

- Simplify the facts to avoid confusion and information overload
- Best is a plain language
- Build, maintain and increase public trust by being open and transparent
- Coordinate messages and dissemination of information

Spokesperson

- A critical strategic decision
- One spokesperson should be designated to respond to media
- Experts who are good communicators
- **Authoritative and credible**
- A full time job in an emergency

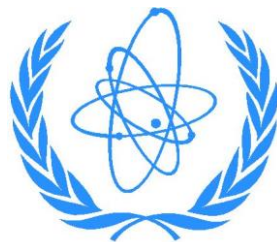


Media Relationships

- Identify key media in advance
- Earn media trust
- Exchange and maintain contact information
- Prioritize media with most “reach” during an emergency
- Proactive media relations in terms of interaction and frequency
- “News servers” where media can get new information on topics they are interested in

Authorities

- Local, including first responders
- National
 - Health, Regulator, Agriculture
- International
 - IAEA, WHO, FAO



International Communications

- Unified System for Information Exchange in Incidents and Emergencies (USIE)

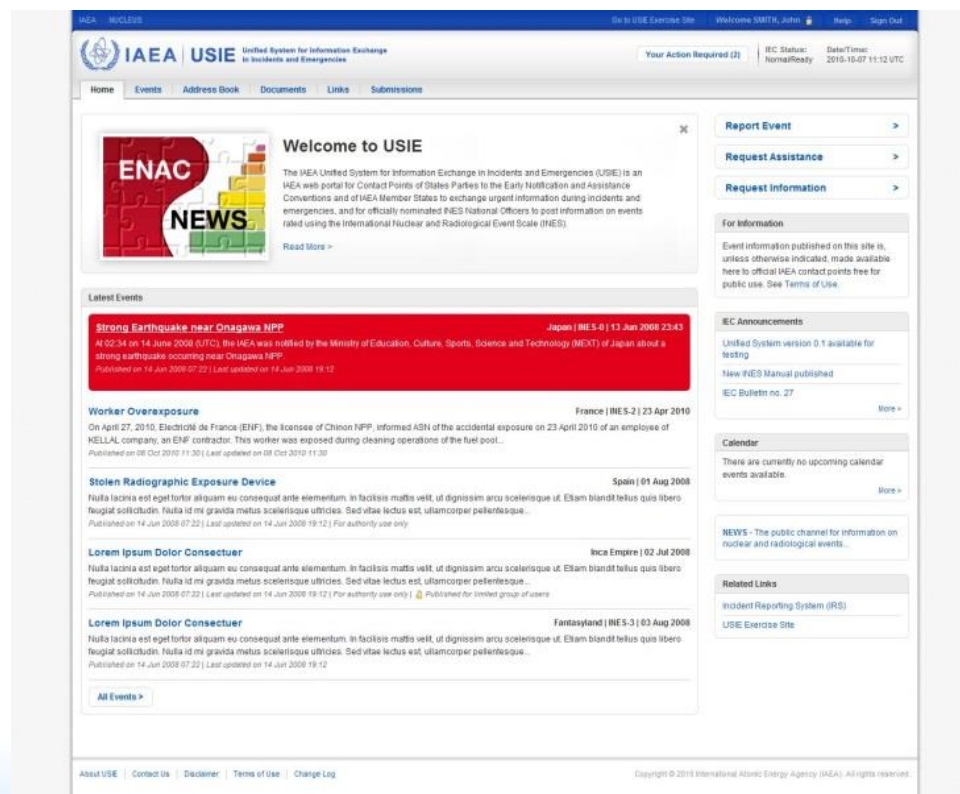
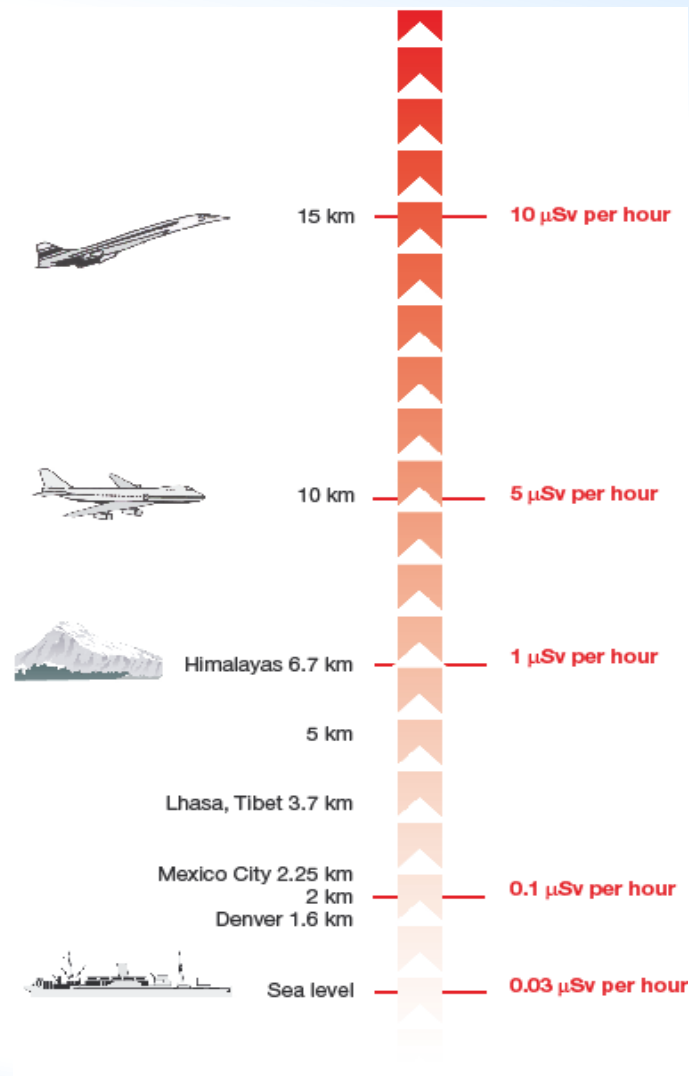


Image courtesy IAEA

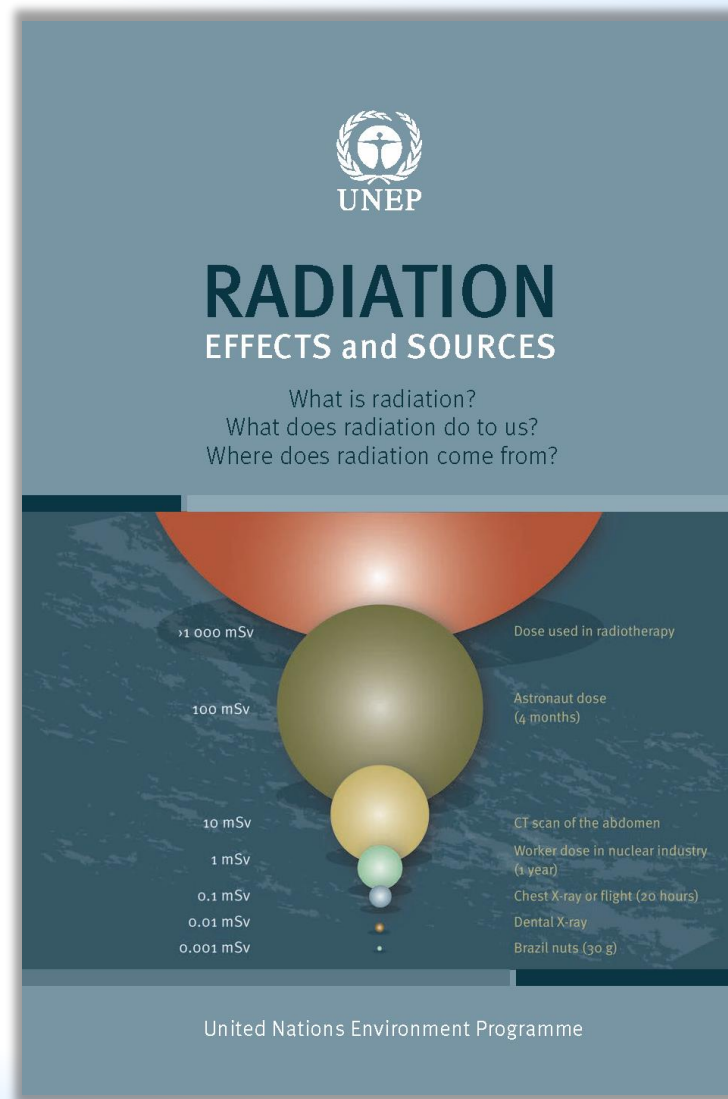
Example: Communicating About Radiation

Cosmic radiation and dose rates of exposure

- Radiation is naturally present in the environment.
 - Natural background radiation
- People are continuously exposed to natural radiation from various sources
- People may also be exposed to artificial radiation from various sources;
- Often, medical exposures from diagnosis and treatment account for the largest dose received



Understand the Basics



Am I Safe?

- In addition to dose and dose rate quantities the following questions must be answered:
 - What was measured or reported?
 - How was the person exposed (exposure scenario)?
 - Who was exposed?



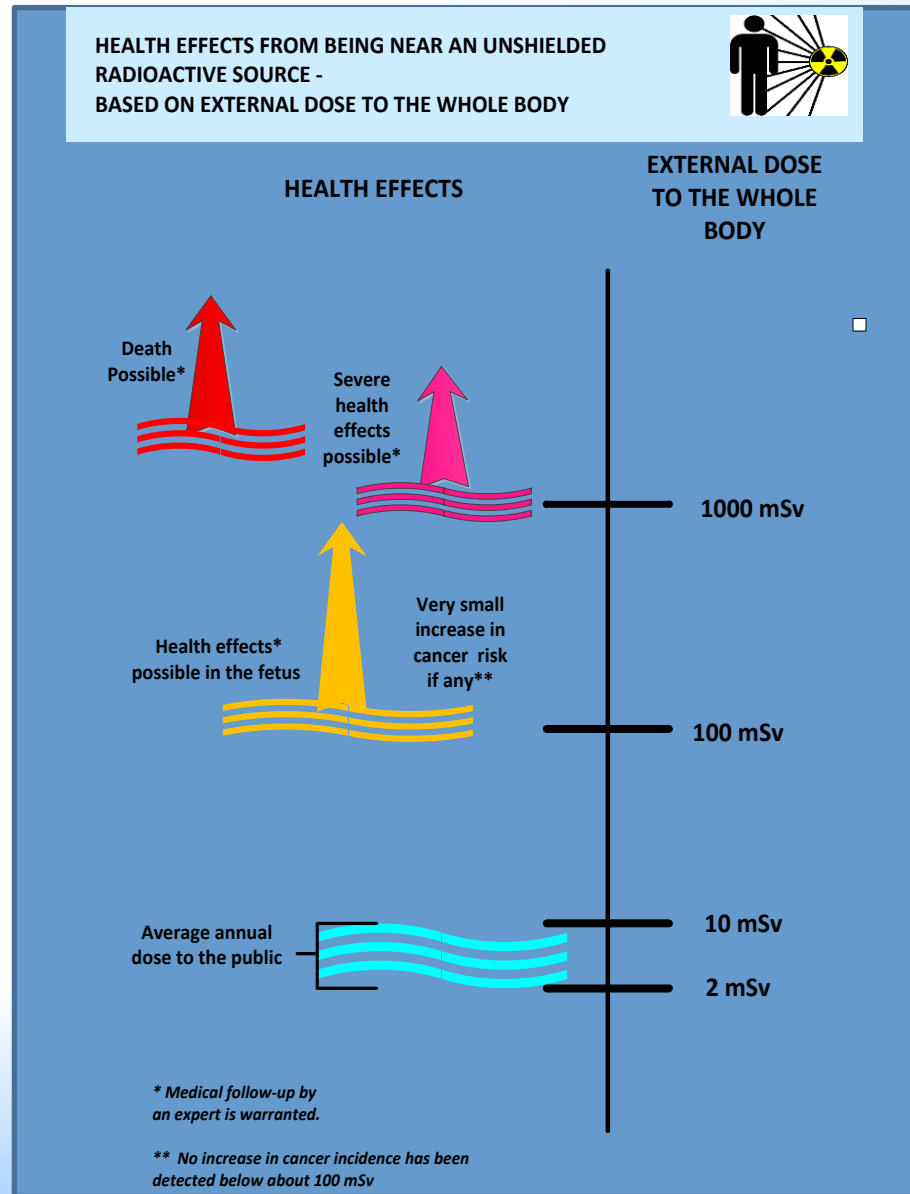
Potential Health Effects

- Death
- Severe health effects (severe deterministic effects):
 - Severe burns
 - Other non-fatal effects
- Health effects to foetus
- Cancer risk

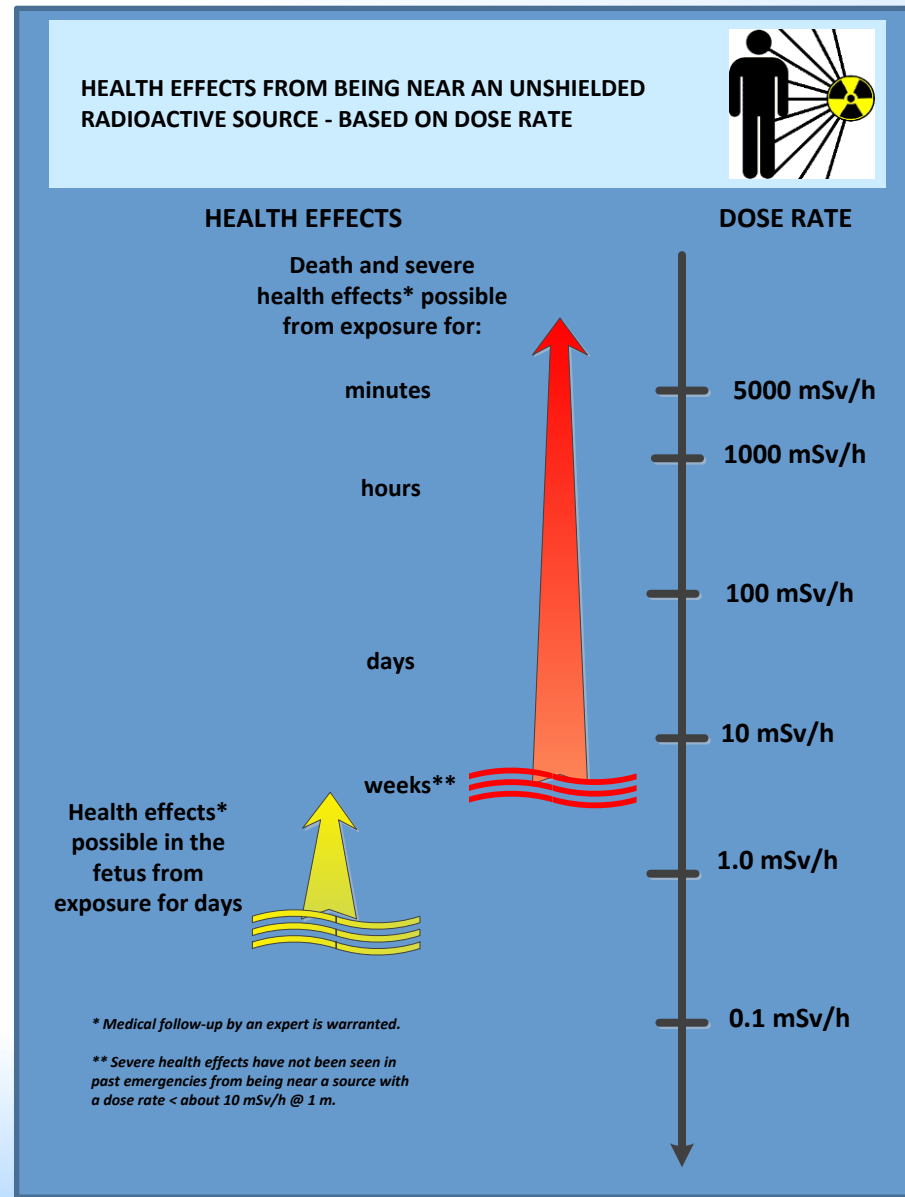


Image courtesy NIRS

Example: Health Effects from Being Near an Unshielded Source

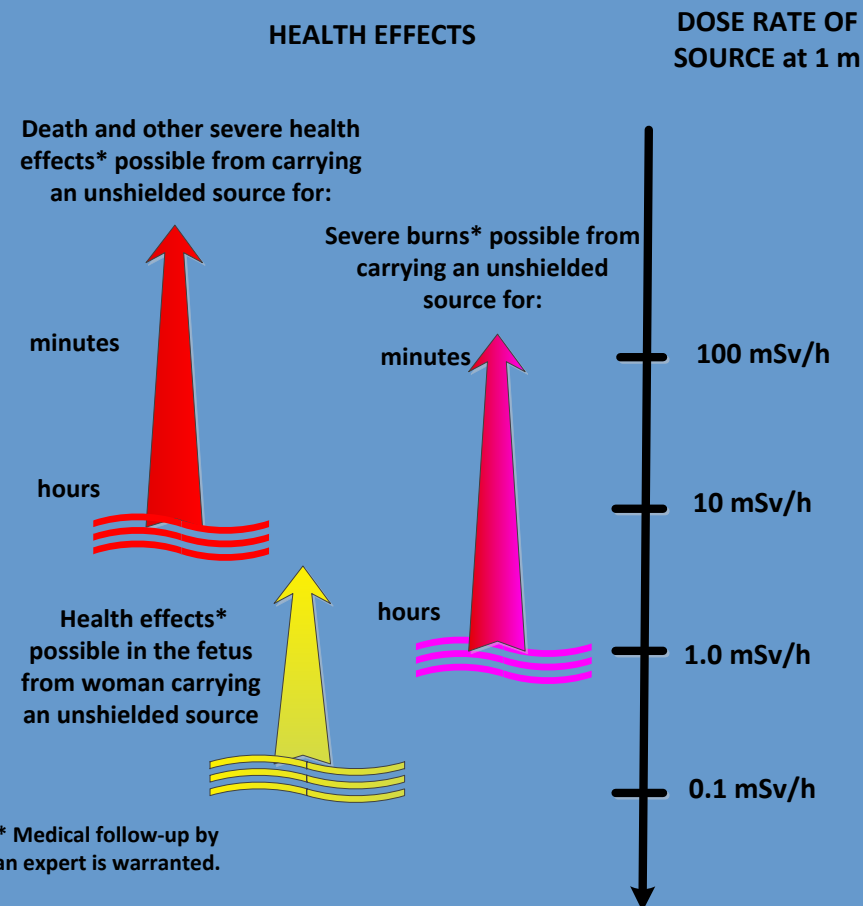
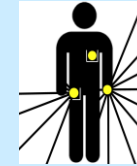


Example: Health Effects from Being Near an Unshielded Source (cont.)

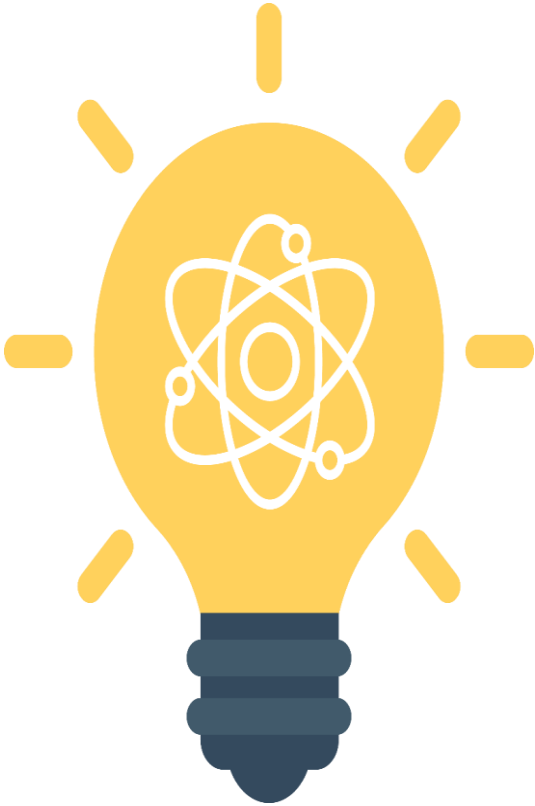


Example: Health Effects from Being Near an Unshielded Source (cont.)

HEALTH EFFECTS FROM CARRYING AN UNSHIELDED
RADIOACTIVE SOURCE - BASED ON DOSE RATE



Key Points



- Public communication helps
 - Effective implementation of protective actions
 - To mitigate consequences of fear and psychological effects
- Communicate in plain language and be open and honest
- EPR-Public Communications (2012) provides guidance

Where to Get More Information

- IAEA GSR Part 7 (2015)
- IAEA EPR-Public Communications (2012)
- IAEA EPR-Public Communication Plan (2015)

iec.iaea.org
iec-information@iaea.org
@IAEAIEC

Thank you!

Ms. Muzna Assi

Emergency Preparedness Officer
Incident and Emergency Centre

m.assi@iaea.org

