

EPA Risk Communication and PFAS

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Warning
about my
officemates:





Risk Communication: Definitions

Risk Communication:

communication intended to provide a general or specific audience with the information they need to make informed independent judgements about risks to health, safety, and the environment (Fischhoff).

At EPA, this means providing
MEANINGFUL, UNDERSTANDABLE,
and **ACTIONABLE** information to the
American public.

PFAS

Acceptability of
Risk: Key
Hazard
Characteristics

More Acceptable	Less Acceptable	
Affects adults especially the elderly	Affects children especially babies	←
Observable	Invisible	←
Exposure is known to exposed	Can be exposed without knowing	←
Contained in known and understood locations	Dispersed, could be anywhere	←
Shared Equally/ Equitably	Unfair or unequal distribution	←
Well understood and defined	New or poorly understood	←
Voluntary	Involuntary	←
Mild consequences	Catastrophic	
Immediate effect	Delayed or unpredictable effect	←
Controllable by individual	No meaningful control steps available	←
Natural	Man made	←



PFAS

Risk
Communication

- Establish shared values.
- Meet audience concerns.
- Provide needed background knowledge.
- Explain uncertainties.
- Give action steps.

SALT Framework

- **Strategy**
- **Action**
- **Learning**
- **Tools**

Caveat: Still under development.



Content Rich Risk Communication Toolkits ...Coming Soon

- PFAS
- Lead
- Ethylene Oxide



The EPA Mission is to
Protect Human Health and
the Environment.

- Risk Communication is
deeply embedded in
virtually all parts of this
mission.

