The Difference Between Risk Communications and Crisis Communications

- **Crisis communication** - communication that happens after an unexpected disaster when we have lost control
- **Risk communication** - catching it on the front end, the pre-event, communication potential hazards
  - **Risk assessment** - a determination of the potential hazards
  - **Risk communication** - sharing risk related info between decision maker and stakeholders

**Risk communication vs public relations**
- Often contrary concepts
- Liability vs. life safety
- Privacy vs. right/need to know
- Image management vs. public perception

Communicating Risk

**When do we communicate risk**
- Before it's a crisis

**Why do we communicate risk**
- Life safety

**How do we communicate risk**
- Get on students playing field
Risk Communication should be:

Educate to Mitigate rather than Arm to Harm: don’t want to scare them you want to equip them with the right info to be prepared

- proactive
- positive: avoid negative statements like do not, quit, stop
- persistent
- personable

Considerations in Risk Communication

- angle of the message
- timing of the message: based on certain events that increase risk
- maintaining the message
- passion/compassion
- message medium

Reaching Your Audience

- What is the best way to reach them?

  - text messages
  - internet
  - print media
  - broadcast media
  - signs/posters/coasters

What about redundant measures

- outdoor warning sirens/ public address

What are the barriers

- language: be wary of double meanings
- technological
- generational
- disabilities?

Define the message

- by the type of event
- by the urgency
- by the audience
- by the medium

What are the expectations
by the administration
by the audience: are they burdened or inconvenience

**Liabilities concerning Risk Communications**

**What are the liabilities**

- what is said
- what is unsaid

**Why withhold information**

- legal limitations
- unstable crowds - civil unrest
- lives or human safety at risk

**The Right Thing to Do**

**Imperial Sugar Explosion**

Feb 7, 2008
John Sheptor, Imperial Sugar CEO
Exploded at 7pm, within 3 hours of incident happen communicated to news outlets: “we believed this was caused by sugar dust”

**Metrolink Rail Accident**

September 12, 2008
Denise Tyrell, Metrolink Spokesperson
Train conductor texting trained derailed, Denise explained what happened to media
“If you don’t know the answer is I don’t know. If you do know, the answer is we do know, but at this time I cannot legally divulge that information.”

**Best Practices at Your Campus**

- give communication to the parents
- what about assessing how effective the delivery of message

**Successful Risk Communications Campaigns**

if risk is small and no great hazard and you can mitigate quickly and quietly pending its ok to keep communication at minimum