

**ATTACHMENT B: Protocol**  
**Message Testing: Radiation Risk Scale**  
**(Focus Group)**

Karen Carera, Ph.D.  
Florie Tucker, MSN, MBA  
Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education

Armin Ansari, Ph.D.  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Background**

People need to know if a situation involving radiation or radioactive materials is “safe” for them or their family. The radiation protection community continues to struggle addressing this need. To address this need, Dr. Armin Ansari, from CDC’s Radiation Studies Branch has created the Radiation Risk Scale as a communication tool for the public to help them assess their own risk in a radiation emergency and understand how following protective actions can lower their risk of health effects. The Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) is to provide technical assistance.

This protocol sets forth the plan for message testing. It addresses:

- Goal
- Objectives
- Target Audience
- OMB Approval
- Methodology
  - Audience Segmentation and Screening
  - Recruiting
  - Schedule
  - IRB
  - Methods of Data Collection
  - Determining Tokens of Appreciation to Focus Group Participants
  - Handling of Data and Records

**Goal**

Explore the effectiveness of the Radiation Risk Scale among the public. A total of 192 burden hours is requested.

**Objectives**

1. Evaluate the extent to which the Radiation Risk Scale effectively communicates radiation risk.
2. Evaluate the extent to which the Radiation Risk Scale is relevant, comprehensible, credible, appealing & motivates desired action.

## **Proposed Research Plan for Focus Groups**

### *Methodology and Research Design*

ORISE proposes to visit 4 communities: Atlanta, Georgia; St. Louis, Missouri; Houston Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona. Data are to be collected by means of focus groups where eight prospective respondents are to be recruited. ORISE personnel will address any questions the participants have regarding the study before the session begins. Discussions are expected to last 90 minutes.

During the beginning of the focus group, the moderator will provide an overview of the study and ground rules for the focus groups and introductions. Next, the moderator will show a video to introduce the Radiation Risk Scale. After the introduction video, the moderator will show another video which will explain a hypothetical high-risk radiation emergency scenario. After the high-risk scenario, participants will be asked questions regarding the message and the radiation scale in the video. Once they have completed their discussion about the high risk scenario, participants will also be shown another video which will explain a hypothetical low-risk radiation emergency scenario. After the low-risk scenario, participants will be asked questions regarding the message and the radiation scale in the video. The focus group will conclude with questions about information sources, such as spokespersons and communication channels.

The moderator's guide is included as Attachment E.

For all

Focus groups are to be conducted at commercial market research facilities, using a professional moderator, Dr. Mark Herring, who will facilitate the groups. All sessions will be conducted in English. Participants will be screened for those comfortable conversing in English.

The possibility exists that some participants will find contemplation of such subject matter upsetting. A subject-matter expert will come in to each group at its conclusion, make a few brief remarks (e.g., thank respondents for their contribution to an important effort), and answer questions for several minutes. If no subject-matter expert is available, participants will receive contact information for CDC's Radiation Studies Branch.

Table 1 illustrates the proposed 2013 focus groups.

**Table 1: 2013 Focus Groups**

	<b>2013 Focus Groups</b>
Audience Segment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public (18 years and older)</li></ul>
Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Atlanta, Georgia</li></ul>

Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Louis, Missouri</li> <li>• Phoenix, Arizona</li> <li>• Houston, Texas</li> </ul>
Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radiation Risk Scale</li> </ul>

A total of 12 groups from 4 different communities will provide feedback about the Radiation Risk Scale. Table 2 illustrates the discussion group design.

**Table 2: 2013 Focus Group Design**

Audience Segment	Atlanta, Georgia	St. Louis, Missouri	Phoenix, Arizona	Houston, Texas	Total
Public	3 Groups (8 participants per group)	3 Groups (8 participants per group)	3 Groups (8 participants per group)	3 Groups (8 participants per group)	12 grps

**Table 3: Facility Locations**

City	Facility Locations
Atlanta, Georgia	<p>Schlesinger Associates  The Palisades Building, Suite 590  5909 Peachtree Dunwoody Rd.  Atlanta, GA 30328  (770) 396-8700  <a href="http://www.schlesingerassociates.com/our_locations/usa/atlanta.aspx">http://www.schlesingerassociates.com/our_locations/usa/atlanta.aspx</a></p>
St. Louis, Missouri	<p>Peters Marketing Research, Inc.  The Paragon Building  12400 Olive Boulevard, Suite 225  Creve Coeur, Missouri 63141  (314) 469-9022  <a href="http://www.petersmktg.com">http://www.petersmktg.com</a></p>
Phoenix, Arizona	<p>Schlesinger Associates in Phoenix, AZ  2355 East Camelback Rd, Suite 800  Phoenix, AZ 85016  (602) 366-1100  <a href="http://www.schlesingerassociates.com/our_locations/usa/phoenix.aspx">http://www.schlesingerassociates.com/our_locations/usa/phoenix.aspx</a></p>
Houston, Texas	<p>Opinions Unlimited  Three Riverway, Suite 250  Houston, TX 77056  (713) 888-0202  <a href="http://www.opinions-unlimited.com/">http://www.opinions-unlimited.com/</a></p>

### Focus Groups

The eligibility screener was designed in conjunction with CDC to ensure that participants represent a mix of age ranges and races/ethnicities reflective of the selected cities.

#### *Public*

- o Be at least 18 years of age
- o Have at least some high school education
- o Be comfortable conversing in English
- o Comfortable sharing their opinions in a group setting
- o Have not participated in a focus group in the last 6 months
- o Does not work in any of the following fields:
  - For a market research company
  - For an advertising agency or public relations firm
  - In the media (TV/radio/newspapers/magazines)
  - As a healthcare professional (doctor, nurse, pharmacist, dietician, etc.)
- o Is not an employee for any of the following:
  - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  - State or local health department
  - Department of Homeland Security
  - State or local emergency management agency
  - Nuclear power plant, Radiation Safety Officer, health physicist or other radiation-related occupation

**Recruitment:** The focus group facility will utilize their existing database to retrieve names of potential participants. Eight participants will be recruited to seat six to eight participants in each session. These individuals will be screened using the screening questionnaire through telephone interviews to ensure they meet the screening criteria. The facilities will submit their list of recruits for final acceptance of each participant. Participation will be strictly voluntary. Prior to participating in the group discussion, respondents will be given a participant information sheet. All participants who agree to participate in the focus groups will be given a copy of the participant sheet to retain for their records.

**Determining Tokens of Appreciation to Focus Group Participants:** Gift cards are offered as a token of appreciation for focus group participants' willingness to engage in the project. The monetary amount offered, \$40 per participant, is impacted by a number of variables for this project, including the following:

- o Total participation time of 1.5 hours: length of the focus group
- o Specifications that each participant has to meet to participate in the study
- o Recommendations from the market research facilities

Gift cards are neutral (not connected with a company, service or product) and have universal utility. It is usually more cost-effective and efficient to offer a monetary token of appreciation, attractive by the participant, to mitigate the cost of the recruitment. The amount needs to be high enough that participants feel like it is worth their time to participate and cannot be so low that participants perceive

their time and candid responses are under-valued. Likewise, incentives cannot be so high that participants become skeptical as to the intention of the focus group.

In our experience, it is most cost effective to offer the recruiter-recommended amount, which results in a better show rate and lower recruiting fees. Recruiters from the market research facilities know from experience what various market segments expect to receive. Recruiters will be paid solely for the length of time required to recruit participants. They will have no monetary gain based on the recommended dollar amount of the gift card.

**Focus Groups:** We anticipate the focus groups will last no longer than 90 minutes. A professional moderator will facilitate the focus groups. The focus groups will be audio recorded and transcribed. CDC staff and other key representatives may observe the focus groups on site in an observation room and/or by live-video streaming. Facilities will provide two copies of audio recordings of each session. No videotaping is to be conducted.

**Moderator's Guides:** Discussion questions will elicit perspectives on the extent to which the Radiation Risk Scale effectively communicates radiation risk. Specific domains include:

- The relevancy of the Radiation Risk Scale
- The comprehensibility of the Radiation Risk Scale
- The credibility of the Radiation Risk Scale, and
- The attractiveness of the Radiation Risk Scale
- The motivational aspects of the Radiation Risk Scale.

**Handling of Data and Records:** Facilities will provide only the qualifications for screening criteria to ORISE personnel. The moderator will keep the first name only during the focus group, and will not deliver names - first or last - to ORISE or CDC. First name and last name will be stripped from records sent to ORISE. No personal identifiers (e.g., last name, last initial, address, completed screening instruments) are to be provided to ORISE or CDC.

ORISE will maintain no identifiers connecting any data collected to any particular respondent; neither will it provide any personal identifiers to CDC or others. Firms which conduct recruiting and host sessions will be required to not provide personal identifiers to ORISE or CDC.

Additionally, ORISE will:

- Retain one set of audio recordings, and at least one copy of any report it produces
- Develop a report in an agreed-upon format summarizing the responses provided by participants; the report will contain no personal identifiers;
- Deliver the report and one set of recordings to CDC;
- Not deliver to CDC or others any personal identifiers of participants;
- Retain records and audio recordings for three years, then burn, shred, or otherwise destroy them.

**Analysis and Report Writing:** After receiving the transcripts of the focus groups, the data will be analyzed for the purpose of categorizing responses and of measuring the relative importance of

respondent characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, and future plans. Upon completion of the research and analysis, a report will be produced, which will include the following components:

- Overview of the research design
- Summary of key findings and recommendations
- Moderator’s guide and
- Eligibility Screener.

**Attachment 1b : Burden Hours and Distribution of Respondents**

Type of Respondents	Form Name	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses per Respondent	Burden per Response (in hr)	Total Burden (in hr)
Public	Eligibility Screener	192	1	15/60	48
	Moderator’s Guide	96	1	90/60	144
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>192 hrs</b>

**Distribution of Respondents**

Audience Segment	Type of Respondent	Atlanta, Georgia	Houston, Texas	Phoenix, Arizona	St. Louis, Missouri	Total Number of Groups	Total Participants
Public	Eligibility Screener Only Participant	48	48	48	48	12	192
	Focus Group Participant	3 Groups (8 participant s/ group)	3 Groups (8 participant s/ group)	3 Groups (8 participant s/ group)	3 Groups (8 participant s/ group)		96
<b>TOTAL</b>		24 Participant s	24 Participant s	24 Participant s	24 participant s	12	<b>192</b>