

## RE-ENTRY MESSAGING FOLLOWING A RADIATION EMERGENCY

CENTER/DIVISION: NCEH, EHHE, RSB

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**Sponsoring institution(s):** NA

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### **Study background:**

The topic for this audience assessment is testing of communication messages designed for early re-entry into an area previously evacuated following a radiation emergency. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Radiation Studies Branch (RSB) testing of messages on re-entry 6 months after an emergency indicated an extreme unwillingness to return. CDC RSB will generate new messages focused on early education of the public immediately post event concerning re-entry, in addition to editing the messages tested previously that addressed re-entry. The purpose of this audience assessment is to test new re-entry messages as well as revised versions of the previously tested messages to assess the public's willingness to return to a contaminated area after evacuation.

### **Project goals and objectives:**

The goal of the project is to explore the effectiveness of the residual contamination messages among the public. Objectives:

1. Evaluate the extent to which the messages effectively communicate the re-entry phase (e.g., clean-up, returning to affected area) associated with elevated environmental radiation levels.
2. Evaluate the extent to which the messages are relevant, comprehensible, credible, appealing & motivate desired action.

### **Role of CDC:**

CDC's Radiation Studies Branch has contracted with Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) to conduct this audience assessment to inform message development for re-entry into an area previously evacuated following a radiation emergency.

### **Populations to be included:**

The assessment will include up to 24 members of the public for this assessment. All participants will:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be comfortable conversing in English

The following criteria will be used to select public participants:

- Have at least some high school education
- Have not participated in a focus group/interview in the last 6 months
- 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.)
  - 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

## **Plans for data/sample collection and analysis:**

### Recruitment

ORAU will hire a commercial market research facility in Atlanta, GA. The facility will use their existing database to retrieve names of potential public participants. Participants will be screened via telephone using the screening questionnaire to ensure they meet the screening criteria (Attachment A). Participation will be strictly voluntary.

### Focus Groups

ORAU proposes to visit 1 community in Atlanta, GA, to conduct focus groups. Data will be collected using focus groups with up to 24 public participants recruited by commercial market research firms. Each focus group will have up to 4 participants and is expected to last about 90 minutes. The six focus groups will be held at a commercial market research facility in Atlanta, GA. A professional moderator will guide the discussion of the focus groups. All groups will be conducted in English. The focus groups will be audio-recorded and transcripts will be prepared from these recordings. The audio recordings will be destroyed after the data analysis and report writing is complete.

During the beginning of the focus groups, the moderator will provide an overview of the study and ask the participant to introduce themselves (first name only). Next, the moderator will show a video to introduce the topic to the participants (Attachment F). The moderator will show the messages to the participants (Attachment B). After the messages are shown, the moderator will ask questions to the participants about the content of the messages such as if the messages effectively communicate the health risk and recovery phase issues associated with elevated environmental radiation levels. Also feedback from participants will be used to determine if the messages are relevant, comprehensible, credible, appealing and motivate desired actions. The focus groups will conclude with questions to participants about information sources, such as spokespersons and communication channels (Attachment C).

The possibility exists that some participants will find contemplation of such subject matter upsetting. Therefore, participants will receive the email and phone number for the Radiation Studies Branch at CDC and the RSB website at the end of the study (See Attachment D).

The staff from the commercial market facility hired by ORAU will audio-record and transcribe the focus groups. No individually identifiable information is being collected in during the focus groups. The proposed data collection will have little or no effect on the participants' privacy. Only comments, quotes, and responses from participants will be noted and used as feedback to inform revisions to the messages. ORAU and CDC staff may observe the focus groups on site in an observation room and/or by live-video streaming. Facilities will provide ORAU two copies of audio recordings of each session. No videotaping is to be conducted. CDC will receive a final report generated by ORAU.

### **Incentives to be provided:**

The commercial market research facility being used for recruitment will offer gift cards to the participants as a token of appreciation for participants' willingness to engage in the project. The token of appreciation offered, \$50 per participant, is impacted by a number of variables for this project, including the following:

- Total participation time of 90 minutes: length of the focus group
- Specifications that each participant has to meet to participate in the study
- Recommendations from the market research facilities

### **Human Subjects:**

This audience assessment has been approved by the Oak Ridge Site-Wide IRB with an exemption status.

### **Collection and management of personal identifiers:**

The commercial market research facility will recruit the participants and the facility will not provide personal identifiers (e.g. last names, address, phone numbers) to ORAU or CDC. ORAU will only receive screening qualification criteria (first name, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.).

For focus groups, no personal identifiers (e.g., last name, last initial, address, completed screening instruments) are to be provided to ORAU or CDC.

Additionally, ORAU will:

- Retain the audio recordings, and at least one copy of any report it produces;
- Deliver the report to CDC;
- Not deliver to CDC or others any personal identifiers of participants;
- Retain records and audio recordings for up to three years, then burn, shred, or otherwise destroy them.

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### **Plans for protection of privacy and data security:**

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**Projected time frame for the project:**

Data collection is expected to occur during June 2017.

**Plans for publication and dissemination of the project findings:**

NA.

**References:**

NA

**Please also attach any relevant documents pertaining to this project, such as protocols, consent forms, surveys or other data collection instruments, technical assist letters, nondisclosure agreements, or IRB approval.**