



National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)  
and the National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC)

NCEH/NPHIC Research Project  
February 2009



## a. Executive Summary

## **NCEH/NPHIC Research Project Analysis**

### **February, 2009**

#### *Executive Summary*

1. A great majority of public health employees report all five messages to be believable and understandable in the electronic survey. When probed, focus group participants have specific suggestions. They include:
  - Identify the organization providing the information in each message.
  - Include a web site or phone number to call for more information in each message.
  - Examine each sentence for clarity. Vague information decreases credibility.
  - Give as many details as possible without clouding the message.
2. When quantitative research is considered, a large majority of public health employees report confidence that they can carry out the instructions in all five messages.

Focus group participants have specific suggestions when asked how to make instructions better. They include:

- Give instructions on what actions to take in each message, not information only.
  - Make instructions sequential and specific.
  - Use general terminology that is understandable to all employees.
  - Explain any technical terms that must be utilized.
  - When possible, explain the geographic area for which the instructions are viable.
3. The weakest response in the quantitative research is whether the employees believe the messages will keep them safe, which for messages 1A, 1C, 2, 3, 4A and 4B dipped below half of those surveyed.

Focus group discussion on this issue points out that trust in the message is influenced by components including:

- A general fear of the subject matter
  - Authority and trustworthiness of the source
  - Perceived accuracy
  - Level of detail
  - Use of commonly understood terminology
4. Job classification, state department, rural or urban location, length of service and proximity to a nuclear power plant have little to no significant impact on answers from employees about the messages. The only significant correlation is that employees living in an urban or mixed urban and rural area have a tendency to be more skeptical of the messages than rural employees.
5. Though information must always be limited, the majority of employees want more information on all five messages.