



Radiological Protection and Public Communication

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Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan

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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION

Radiological Protection and Public Communication

ICRP advice for post-accident recovery

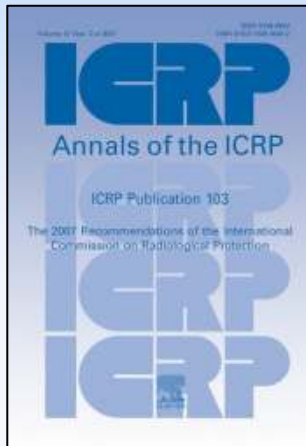
Good public communication can:

- Help people be safe
- Directly improve living conditions

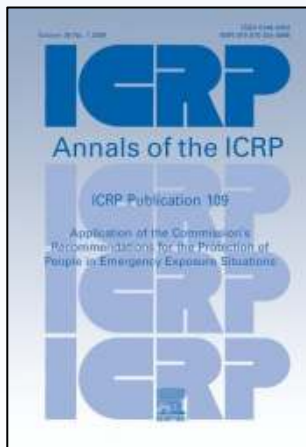
Poor public communication can:

- Create and reinforce misconceptions about safety
- Damage confidence in authorities and experts
- Increase stress and anxiety

ICRP Publications



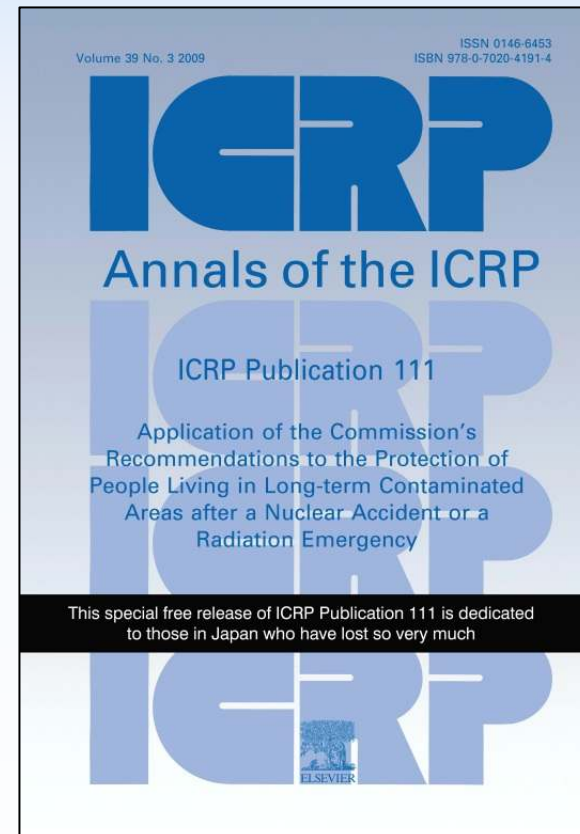
Publication 103
**Fundamental
Recommendations**



Publication 109
**Emergency
Situations**

Publication 111

Post-Accident Recovery



Protection Strategy

- Protective actions implemented centrally and locally by authorities, experts, and professionals
- **Self-help protective actions** directly implemented by the exposed individuals with the support of the authorities



Protective Actions Implemented by Authorities

- Clean-up of buildings
- Remediation of soil and vegetation
- Changes in animal husbandry
- Provision of clean foodstuffs
- Waste management
- Health surveillance
- Monitoring of the environment and produce
- **Provision of information, guidance, instruction and equipment**
- **Education of children, and information for particular exposed groups and the public at large**

Self-help Protective Actions

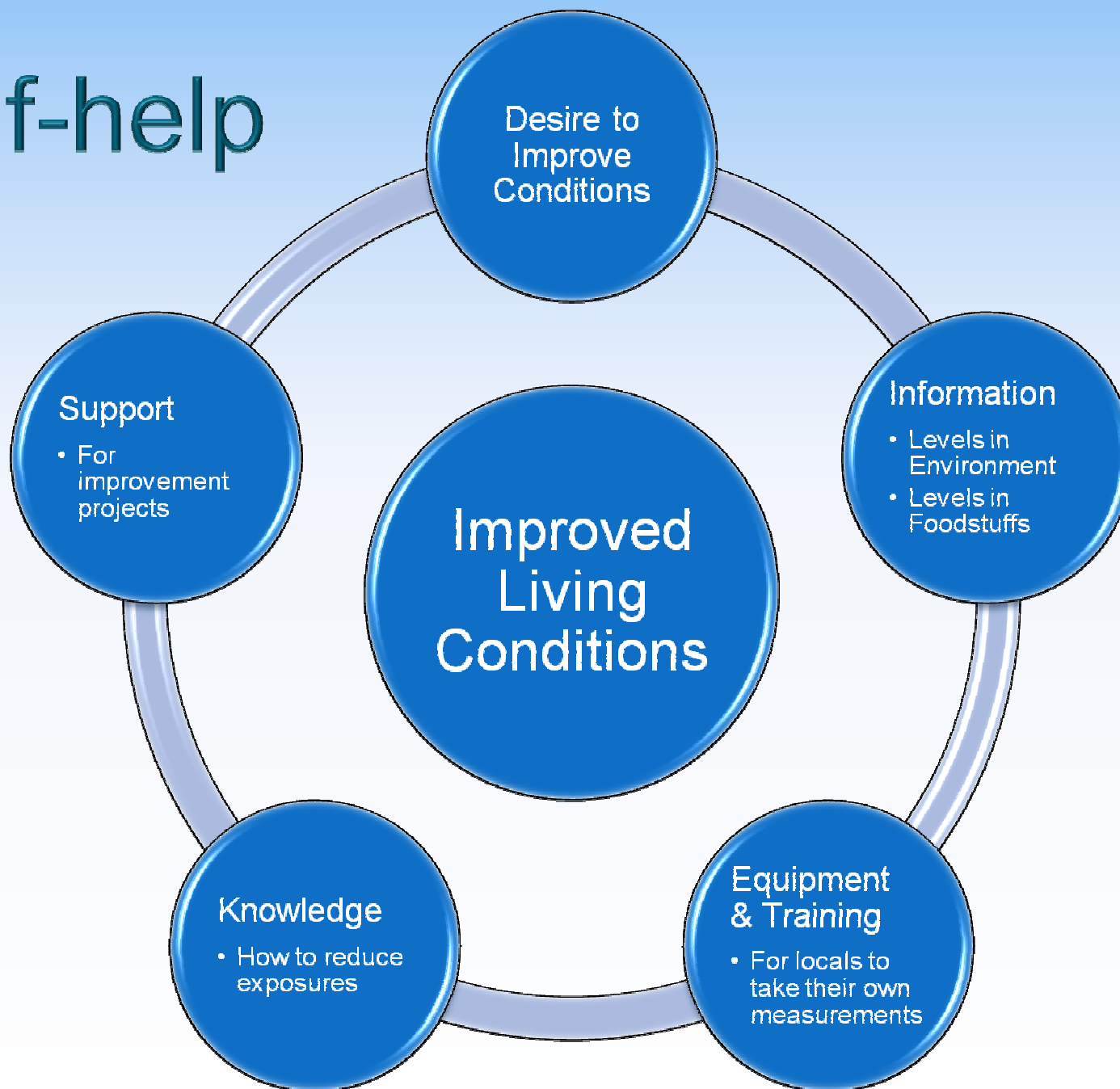
Informed actions taken by inhabitants of affected areas to reduce their exposure and the exposure of the people for whom they have responsibility (e.g. children, elderly)

Why?

- Exposure is largely driven by individual behaviour
- Individuals regain control of their situation
- Inhabitants have local knowledge

Self-help protective actions complement and are supported by actions taken by authorities

Self-help



Local Forums

*Authorities should facilitate the setting-up of **local forums** involving representatives of the affected population and relevant experts (e.g. health, radiation protection, agriculture authorities, etc.). These forums will allow gathering and **sharing of information**, and favour common **assessment of the effectiveness** of strategies driven by the populations and the authorities.*

ICRP Publication 111

Key Considerations

- Every dimension of daily life is effected
- Management goes far beyond radiological protection (health, environmental, economic, social, psychological, cultural, ethical, political, etc.)
- The language of radiological protection is foreign
- The multitude of “expert” voices (positive, negative)
- Mass media and social media play important roles

Multiple “Expert” Voices

Can be positive

- A multitude of (trusted) voices providing similar information can increase confidence

Can be negative

- People cannot easily differentiate between views with broad consensus and “fringe” views
- Extreme views based on poor science can create unwarranted alarm, resulting in real harm

Social & Mass Media

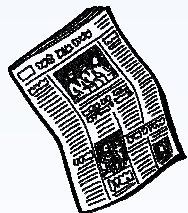


Social Media

- An ever increasing force
- Over time, sensible voices seem to outweigh (but never replace) extreme views



Mass Media



- Most communications go through mass media
- Moral responsibility to provide reliable information
- Unreliable information can cause unwarranted fear and real harm
- Well founded and useful information can improve safety

Issues Identified from the NPP Accident in Japan and Recommendations to Improve the System of Radiological Protection

ICRP Task Group 84

- Chair: Abel J. González (ICRP Vice-chair)
- Established: June 18, 2011
- Summary report released: November 22, 2012
- Advice to ICRP, not of ICRP
- 18 issues identified & several recommendations
- Many relate to communications

TG 84: Issues Relating to Communications

- Risks of low-dose exposure, particularly internal exposure
- Complexities of the system of protection: various units, exposure situations, reference levels, etc.
- Protection of children and pregnant women
- The meaning of “contamination”

Some Obvious Advice (1)

- Communications should
 - Restore personal control, confidence, and hope
 - Promote responsible action
 - Improve safety and general living conditions
- Construct a discourse that helps citizens, experts, and authorities to act together to manage the day-to-day situation
- Focus on the questions and concerns of stakeholders
- Appeal to the responsibility of each actor

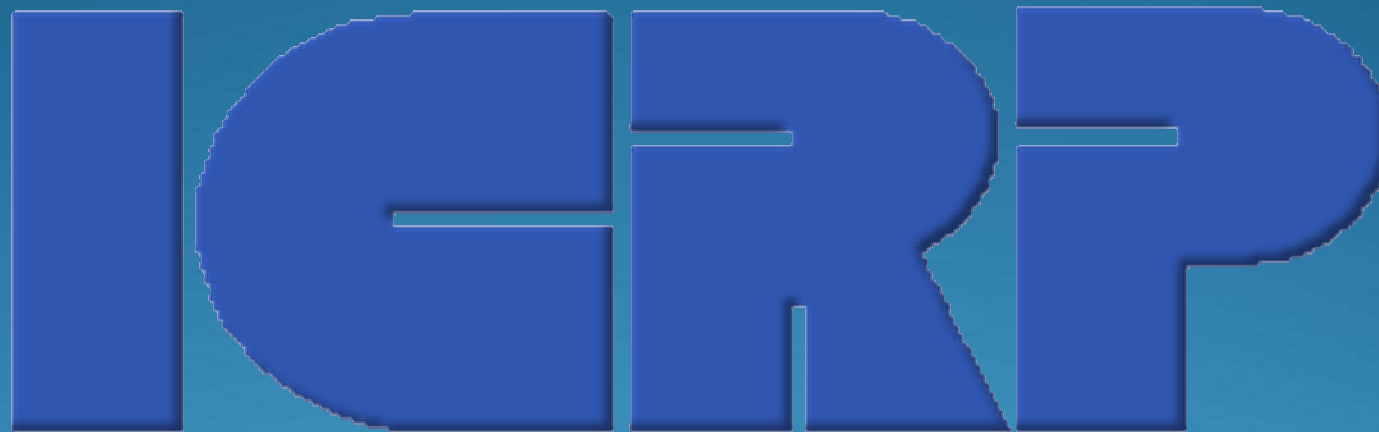
Some Obvious Advice (2)

- Be open, honest and realistic
 - Remain true (scientifically) on the possible actions and their implications
- Use plain language
 - Avoid expert jargon, euphemisms, and paradoxical injunctions
- Provide clear, concise, and practical advice
 - Present the facts and what can be done to improve the situation

Some Obvious Advice (3)

- Avoid relying too heavily on requirements and prohibitions
- Be reassuring when appropriate
- Give people the knowledge they need to make their own decisions, and the tools they need to take their own actions

Most people don't need or want a lesson on radiological protection: they need to know how to work together to improve their situation



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