

DEVELOPING NON-TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR HPV CHEMICALS

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THE ALLIANCE FOR CHEMICAL AWARENESS

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While the ACA believes that the approaches represented here are sound, it is clearly understood that this guidance will not be necessary or even appropriate in certain circumstances. Ultimately, the approach to communicating HPV information will be up to the sole discretion of individual sponsors, and will depend on the sponsor's judgment about the needs of specific audiences to understand the potential hazards of and exposures to a given chemical.

Introduction:

As part of a comprehensive communications package for sharing the results of HPV chemical screening-level assessments with interested audiences, some sponsors may wish to prepare reports that can be used to relay the results of the assessments to non-technical audiences.

Defining “Non-Technical” Audiences:

Even within the general heading of “non-technical audience,” research suggests that there are at least two distinct subpopulations, each of whom may have their own individual communications needs. Within the U.S. population, consumer research shows that roughly 10-15% of the general public is interested in health and environmental safety data, such as the HPV chemical data. The research suggests that personal experiences, such as health concerns of a family member or local environmental issues, drive the interests of these “dedicated information seekers.” These individuals want to make informed choices about the products they use, and they tend to seek information to make these choices from a wide range of sources.

Consumers in general may not put their trust in information *per se*, but in the authoritative conveyance of that information by someone else whose opinion they value. Such “opinion leaders” have been shown to be critical in the effective adoption of new ideas and information. Although they represent a limited percentage of the general population, dedicated information seekers, by virtue of their interest in chemical information, could serve as potential opinion leaders to help inform broader non-technical audiences. In the case of HPV information, members of the mass media and community activists also may represent opinion leaders.

Thus, although non-technical reporting may initially be envisioned as targeting only a single audience, there actually may be (at least) two separate non-technical audiences to consider. The initial non-technical audience may consist of the dedicated information seekers, described above. These individuals are expected to be interested in a moderately detailed characterization of the HPV information, along with links or points of contact to obtain additional information. In terms of communications strategies, a more active outreach program that targets these individuals may be appropriate for this audience.

The second potential non-technical audience is what usually gets referred to as “the general public.” A reporting strategy for addressing these individuals will generally target the level of communication at roughly an eighth grade level of comprehension. A passive communication strategy that relies on informational web sites and stand-by reports may be appropriate for this audience.

General Rules for Non-Technical Reporting:

- When developing communications for non-technical audiences, sponsors should consider the distinction in the level of interest in HPV information between the “general public” and “opinion leaders.” Two separate, but mutually-supportive communications may be appropriate for these two audiences.
- In describing the chemicals’ uses, all non-technical HPV communications should clearly identify those uses that were considered in the assessment of exposure, and should be explicit that these uses formed the basis for the sponsor’s conclusions.
- Sponsors should avoid “statements of the absolute,” with regard to the conclusions in the reports, and should acknowledge the uncertainty and limitations of the analyses.
- All non-technical reports should provide information that will direct the reader to sources of additional details.
- HPV communications for all non-technical audiences should be focused, factual and friendly, in order to promote comprehension.
- If possible, all non-technical HPV communications should describe in simple terms the purpose that the HPV chemical serves in a particular formulation (e.g. fragrance, propellant, etc.).
- HPV communications for all non-technical audiences need to include an element that answers the question “How does this substance affect me?”
- If possible, sponsors should consider having public relations professionals review any non-technical communications, prior to their release.
- HPV communications for opinion leaders should be written with a medium level of detail, with sponsors cautioned against sacrificing the quality of any report in the interest of brevity.
- HPV fact sheets for general non-technical audiences should be targeted at roughly an eighth-grade level of reading comprehension.

Possible Reporting Approaches:

As mentioned previously, sponsors may want to develop varying levels of non-technical communications, depending upon: 1) the nature of the audience being targeted; 2) whether the communication will be part of an active versus passive communications strategy; and, 3) the nature and level of hazard and exposure information available for dissemination.

Attachment #1 depicts one possible framework for developing a non-technical HPV report for general audiences. Additional guidance and examples on the preparation of non-technical reports can be found at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html>. Sponsors also may want to adapt a “Frequently Asked Questions” format for certain levels of non-technical reporting.

Attachment #1
Potential Outline for HPV Reports
For General Non-Technical Audiences

Screening Level Assessment for ChemX

Sponsor's Conclusions:

The potential risk associated with any chemical depends on the hazards of the chemical, and how much humans and the environment may be exposed to it. The manufacturers and processors of ChemX believe that consumers who may be exposed to this material have the right to information about potential risks associated with it. [A conclusion about the priority of the HPV chemical for further action may be appropriate here.]

This fact sheet is being provided so that people can understand the results of hazard and exposure evaluations that were conducted on ChemX. The conclusions reached in this document are based on a consideration of the uses of ChemX described below, and on the existing toxicity testing data for this material.

Exposure and Use Information:

General

To estimate how much a person might come into contact with ChemX, the manufacture, processing and major uses of ChemX were examined. The methods used to estimate the amount of exposure in this assessment were based on standard techniques that used prudent assumptions about exposure, in situations where information was lacking.

Based on an analysis of existing information, of the ___kg of ChemX produced annually, roughly ___% is used in _____: roughly ___% is used in _____; and roughly ___% is used in _____. [A statement describing the approximate amount of the chemical that was accounted for in this analysis may be appropriate here.]

Human Exposure

Based on an analysis of the uses of ChemX described above, the normal way(s) by which someone could come into contact with ChemX is/are from _____ while _____. [Depending upon how widely it is used in applications that could result in exposure, multiple statements about the potential routes for exposure to the chemical may be appropriate here.]

Considering the uses of ChemX mentioned above, it is estimated that someone using the products containing this material could be expected to be exposed to a range of between _____ and _____ of ChemX. The upper end of human exposure would not be expected to exceed _____.

Environmental Exposure

ChemX that enters the environment will likely _____. This is because ChemX is a _____ chemical that tends to _____. [A summary of the environmental fate of the chemical, describing which environmental compartments it may tend to partition into, and how that disposition could impact exposure may be appropriate here.]

Hazard Information:

Health Effects

The health effects from exposure to ChemX have been tested using in a variety of approved methods. ChemX was tested for a limited number of health effects. Based on the existing testing, the lowest level of exposure to ChemX that was shown to be without adverse health effects was _____.

Ecological Effects

When tested for ecological effects, scientists observed no effects at levels at and below _____ in _____. [A summary of the ecological hazard endpoints that were evaluated may be appropriate here.]

Physical Hazards

ChemX is/is not a flammable/corrosive material. As such, _____.

Chemical Priority Information (Sponsor's Opinion):

The exposure assessment estimated that the anticipated human exposures to ChemX would range between _____ and _____. This compares with information from the hazard assessment, which indicates that a lowest level shown to be without adverse health effects when ChemX was tested was _____.

[A brief risk characterization here that summarizes the sponsor's conclusions about the results of the hazard and exposure information comparison, identifies the key uncertainties in the analysis, and indicates the priority for further action on the HPV chemical based on the currently available information may be appropriate here.]

Additional Information:

Additional information on ChemX can be obtained by calling () _____, or on the Internet at: www._____.