



**IAEA**

International Atomic Energy Agency  
*Atoms for Peace and Development*

# Member State Perspective: **Canada**

**67<sup>th</sup> REGULAR SESSION  
OF THE IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE  
SENIOR SAFETY AND  
SECURITY REGULATORS' MEETING**

**September 28, 2023**

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# Introduction



“

People build trust when they see their interests and values reflected in our work...  
Building trust is not something you *do*.  
It is a product of *how* you do things.”

Rumina Velshi  
President and CEO, CNSC



# Canadian Context



Seven decades of innovation in nuclear research and technology

Mis and dis information about nuclear energy continues

The CNSC communicates to the general public,  
stakeholders and politicians

**Communication is relationship building**



Pickering Nuclear Generating Station



# Perceived Risks



**Traditionally** focussed  
on the risks of radiological  
health impacts

Mental health and  
psychosocial factors hold  
**significant weight**

**Know your audience**

**Anticipate and respond to perceived risks**

**Not dumbed down, but no need for a dictionary**





# Case Study: Pickering False Alert



- Provincial government alert was **erroneously sent to millions** of residents, related to the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station
- More than **20,000 orders of potassium iodide pills** made on that day (compared to average 10 per day).
- **500% increase in traffic** on the CNSC external website

The event initiated organization-wide thinking on **how to improve trust-building, better understand fears, and perceptions, and more effectively communicate risk to the public.**



## The CNSC was not fast enough in responding.



- Plant operator communicated 40 minutes after that it was a false alarm
- CNSC took over an hour to issue a tweet
- 6 hours to get content posted to website
- 11 hours for internal message to be issued
- No news release to media

## Lesson's learned:

Needed **better coordination** across our organization.

Required **advanced training in risk communications** and risk perception

Needed expanded **research on how people perceived** risk and their perception of the CNSC.

Needed to **know our public better** and **educate** them.



# The Facts



## Nuclear plants in Canada are safe and surrounded by beautiful, natural environments

### Indigenous groups

- Share traditional knowledge
- Assist in collecting samples for environmental monitoring

### Indigenous knowledge

- Is now interweaved into our regulatory framework
- Fills a communications void



Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station



# Transparency



CNSC holds frequent public hearing and meetings that allow the public to:

- Learn about nuclear facilities and projects
- Participate in the regulatory process as intervenors

Effective communication requires us to:

- Find ways to deal with disruptive factors
- Give equal time to diverse views
- Champion different voices
- Be more inclusive and deliberate



We provide funding for different groups to do their own research and attend our hearings





# Safety



CNSC staff on an inspection

## INVESTIGATION

# Nuclear reactor pressure tubes are deteriorating faster than expected. Critics warn regulators are 'breaking their own rules'

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has allowed utilities to operate tubes beyond licensing limits, a crucial concession for the nation's aging reactors

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# Communications Scenario on Safety



- Decommissioned uranium mining sites still questioned for safety after **decades** of studies demonstrate that people near these facilities are as healthy as the rest of Canada
- Communications on this must be ongoing
- We are all about safety and have nothing to hide
- We put restrictions on fishing in lakes located on historical mining and milling sites
- Today the CNSC requires facility operators to maintain adequate financial guarantees to cover clean-up and monitoring of sites after they're closed.



Elliot Lake historic sites, Ontario



# Communications Scenario on Waste



Canada's nuclear waste has been stored at NPPs without incident since the 1960s.

The Nuclear Waste Management Org has been in dialogue with Canadians to develop an approach for long-term care of used nuclear fuel that is:

- ✓ **Socially acceptable**
- ✓ **Technically sound**
- ✓ **Environmentally responsible**
- ✓ **Economically feasible**

The mis and dis-information on the deep geological repository seems to have no limits...and it is impeding its progress.



# The Canadian Perspective



The CNSC perspective on communications continues to evolve. The digital aspects of communications must be covered:

- Web presence
- Social media, etc

We are taking a **modern old-fashioned approach** to communicating...

- Calling up energy reporters and having a casual conversation on background
- Getting to know your stakeholders and how they need you to communicate so they'll sit at the table
- Important to share knowledge with federal partners and establish cooperative relationships



Communication means  
getting through to people





# What Else is the CNSC Doing?



Co-leading the development of a **new NEA green booklet, 'Characteristics of a Trusted Regulator'**.

It will provide guidance on key characteristics that include:

- Establishing and maintaining a trustworthy decision-making process
- Continuously strengthening safety culture
- Allocating resources to make information available to the public
- Clear, consistent and timely communication for two-way dialogue

Be trusted voices

Share what you do on various channels

Be authentic



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*Thank you!*

