

7-0 Public Education Best Practices



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7-1: Know the Target Audience and Their Needs

Practice Statement: In order to effectively promote damage prevention and influence/improve damage prevention habits, it is necessary to identify the target audience, establish what their education and awareness needs are, and to create a communications package that is tailored to those needs.

Practice Description: The fundamental reason for conducting education and awareness campaigns is to try to influence people to change their behaviour to reduce utility damage and increase public safety.

The organizations and individuals who could benefit from damage prevention education and awareness are extensive and diverse. To identify the target audience:

- Examine damage data and trends
- Categorize incidents by: frequency & severity
- Rank and prioritize incidents
- To effectively communicate educational objectives:
- Clearly identify the issues and root causes.
- Describe new behaviour and establish what it would take to change behaviour
- Reinforce changes in behaviour.

7-2: Develop and Use a Marketing Plan

Practice Statement: Develop a marketing plan that will take in to account the training needs of the target audience, available resources, communications media and timeframes.

Practice Description: A strategic marketing plan enables better implementation, control and continuity of advertising and promotional programs. The plan sets realistic goals and allocates sufficient resources required to achieve them. It also accommodates the need to track and analyze results.

7-3: Practice Project Management

Practice Statement: Practice Project management when executing the marketing plan.

Practice Description: Effective Project management consists of:

- Goal setting
- Resource management
- Task identification
- Timelines

7-4: Create an Effective Damage Prevention Message

Practice Statement: When promoting damage prevention, create a message that is understood and retained.

Practice Description: An effective message should motivate the targeted audience to positive action. The objective is to put desired behaviours into practice quickly, easily, and repeatedly.

7-5: Promote the Damage Prevention Message

Practice Statement: Promoting the damage prevention message by finding creative ways to influence the target audience to:

- Listen attentively to the message
- Remember what they heard
- Change their behaviour.

Multiple stakeholders with similar goals and messages can partner together to reduce costs and maximize impact.

Practice Description: Promoting the damage prevention message can be done through a variety of means and media. Mailings involve delivering a specific message to a particular target audience (e.g. - specific geographic area, market sector, or demographic category).

Professionally designed messages can be effective at securing the attention of a broader target audience. (e.g. newspaper advertising, trade journal ads, brochures, sponsorships, transit system signs, news and weather reports)

Where possible take advantage of free media, such as public service announcements made by newspaper, radio, television and available websites.

Promotional items present a method of promoting key messages and are branding opportunities.

7-6: Establish Strategic Relationships

Practice Statement: Develop strategic working relationships to assist in the promotion of damage prevention.

Practice Description: Strategic relationships can be developed with others who have shared or similar issues, interests, and needs. These could include industry associations, equipment manufacturers and trade groups. Other stakeholders can include government agencies, emergency responders and media.

7-7: Measure Results and Strive to Improve

Practice Statement: Critically review the results and outcomes of the marketing plan initiatives. Identify what works well and what does not. Implement lessons learned and strive for continuous program improvement.

Practice Description: Determine the effective elements of the marketing plan to establish the framework for future plans. Gauge target audience response to structured training and awareness initiatives. This can be done through surveying the intended target audience (via direct mail, telephone etc.) to determine if behaviours have changed, and to what extent. Changes in damage statistics are another means to determine if a change in behaviour for a general area or a specific owner has been effectively produced by the marketing plan delivery.

Identify and address gaps in the marketing plan. Modify the program accordingly and strive to improve to achieve the program goal(s).

