

# Risk Management in Practice

Lecture Title:  
Risk Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

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Undergraduate Diploma in  
Occupational Health and Safety

# Welcome and Objectives

Focuses on effective communication strategies and stakeholder involvement in risk management.

## Learning Objectives:

- Recognize importance of stakeholder engagement.
- Develop effective risk communication plans.
- Facilitate collaborative risk management processes.



# Why is it significant within the context of Risk Management in Practice?

1. Builds trust & transparency: Clear communication fosters confidence in decisions.
2. Improves decision-making: Diverse input leads to better risk strategies.
3. Enhances compliance: Clarifies roles and responsibilities.
4. Enables timely response: Quick reporting and action during incidents.
5. Strengthens safety culture: Promotes shared ownership of risk management.



# Risk Communication & Stakeholder Engagement: Legal and Cultural Context in Malta (OHS)

Understanding OHS communication within Malta's unique frameworks



# Overview of Legal Framework



## Legal Basis and Alignment

Malta's OHS laws (Chapter 646 of the Laws of Malta) follow the Health and Safety at Work Act (2024), aligned with EU Directive 89/391/EEC focusing on prevention.

## Worker Protection Scope

The Act protects physical, psychological, and social well-being of all workers including employees, contractors, and self-employed.

## Governance and Oversight

Health and Safety Executive and Governing Board ensure structured governance and accountability in workplace safety.

## Enforcement and Penalties

Penalties include fines up to €50,000 or imprisonment for serious breaches enforcing compliance with safety standards.

# Employer Duties

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## Hazard Communication

Employers must inform workers about workplace hazards using language they understand to ensure safety awareness.

## Emergency Instructions

Clear and actionable emergency instructions must be provided to all employees to prepare for workplace incidents.

## Training and Documentation

Employers are required to conduct regular safety training and keep up-to-date safety documentation.

## Legal Compliance and Consequences

Failure to meet safety duties can lead to fines and criminal charges, emphasizing legal compliance importance.



# Emergency Communication Requirements



## Comprehensive Training

Training ensures workers understand signals and respond correctly during emergencies.

## Communication Redundancy

Multiple communication channels reach all employees, minimizing confusion during critical incidents.

## Regular Emergency Drills

Drills reinforce preparedness and ensure effective procedure execution during real emergencies.

# Cultural Considerations



## Bilingual Communication

Malta's bilingual workforce requires emergency alerts and safety messages in both English and Maltese for clarity.

## Collaborative Workplace Culture

Maltese culture values collaboration and consensus, so messages should be clear, practical, and jargon-free.

## Diversity and Inclusivity

Migrant workers add cultural diversity, requiring use of visual aids and simplified language in communications.

## Group Recognition Preference

Public praise is uncommon; group recognition fosters trust and commitment in the Maltese workplace.

# Introduction to Risk Communication



# What is Risk Communication?

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## Definition of Risk Communication

Risk communication is sharing information and opinions about potential hazards to health or safety among various groups.

## Role in Occupational Safety

It ensures workers and stakeholders understand risks and how to reduce them effectively in the workplace.

## Benefits of Effective Communication

Prevents accidents, builds trust, fosters safety culture, and supports proactive risk management decisions.



# Principles of Risk Communication

## Transparency Builds Trust

Sharing all relevant information openly fosters trust and strengthens relationships with stakeholders.

## Clarity in Messaging

Presenting information in a straightforward and jargon-free manner ensures understanding by diverse audiences.

## Timely Information Delivery

Prompt dissemination of information is critical during emergencies to facilitate informed decision-making.

## Credibility Through Consistency

Consistent, accurate, and honest communication builds credibility and maintains stakeholder confidence.



# Communication Models and Channels (The Basics)



# Models of Risk Communication

## Linear Communication Model

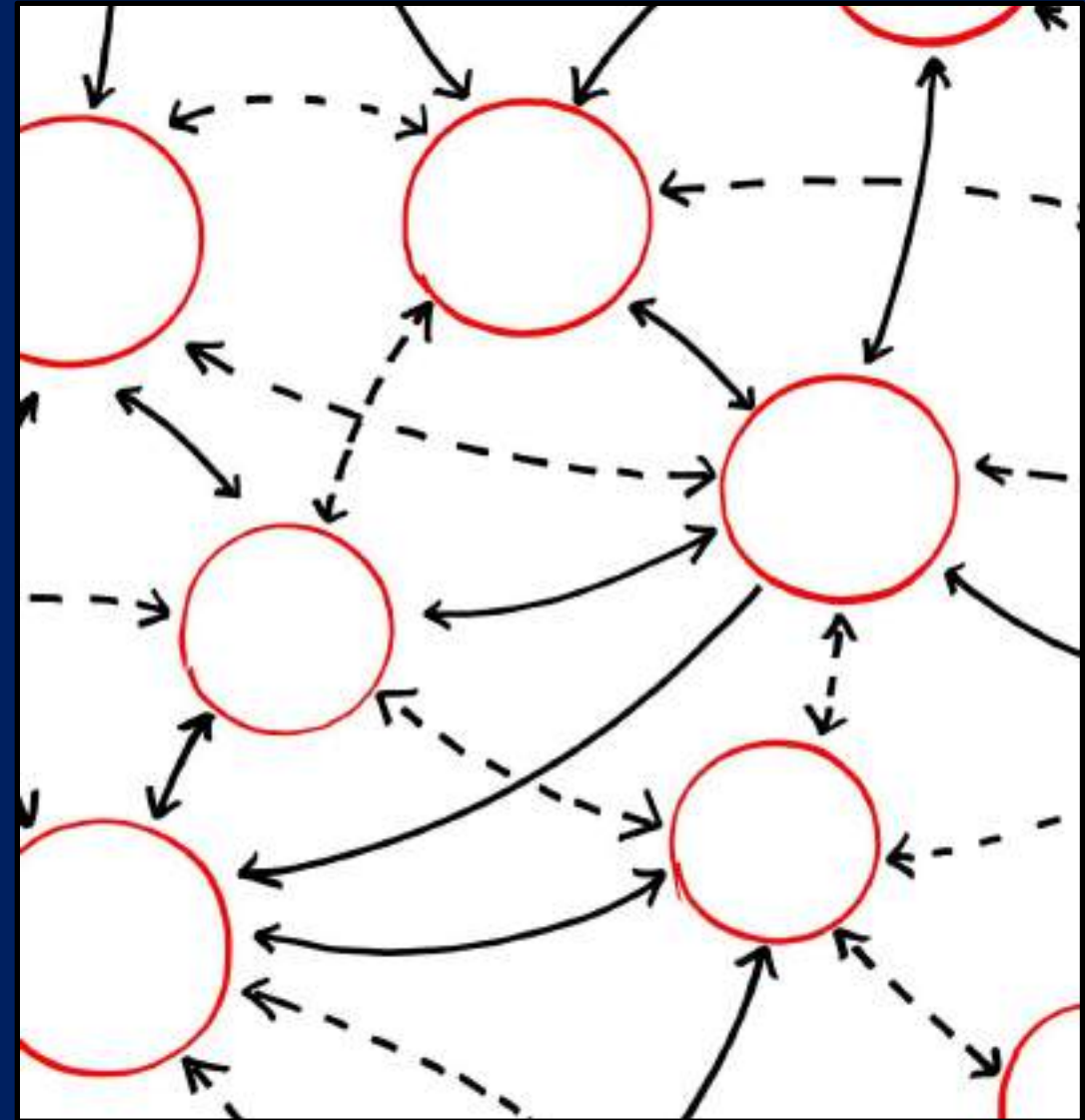
The linear model features one-way communication from sender to receiver, ideal for clear and direct message delivery.

## Interactive Communication Model

The interactive model enables two-way dialogue, encouraging feedback and collaborative problem-solving.

## Workplace Effectiveness

Interactive models engage employees more effectively by addressing concerns and fostering collaboration.



# Channels and Tools

## Verbal Communication

Verbal methods like meetings and briefings enable immediate interaction and clarification among participants.

## Written Communication

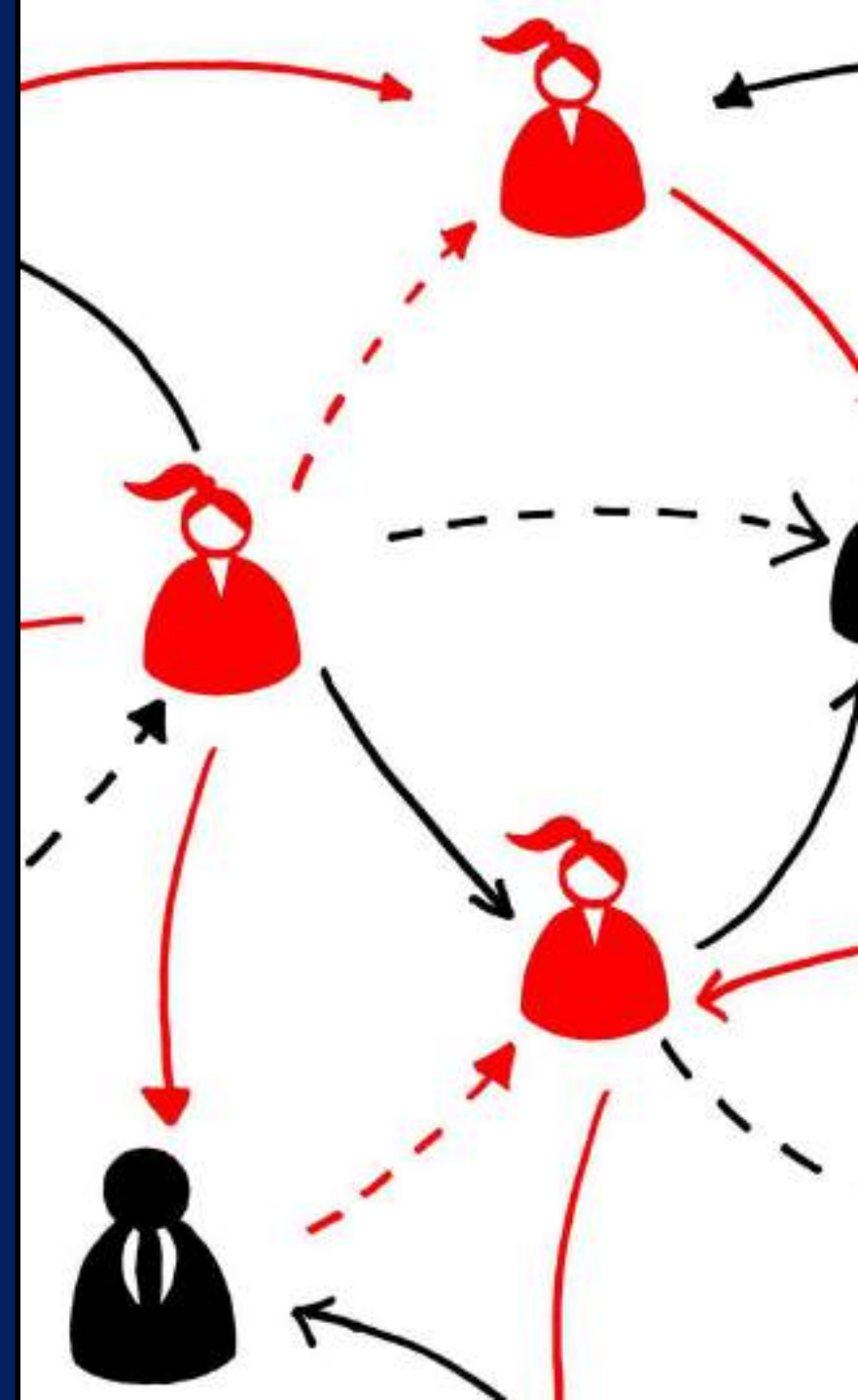
Written materials such as memos and reports provide detailed and permanent documentation for reference.

## Digital Tools

Digital platforms like emails and intranet enable quick and broad dissemination of information.

## Visual Aids

Visual tools such as infographics and signage improve understanding of complex information.



# Barriers to Effective Communication

## Language and Literacy Challenges

Differences in language and low literacy levels hinder message understanding in diverse workplaces.

## Lack of Trust

Stakeholders often distrust information perceived as incomplete or biased, impacting communication effectiveness.

## Use of Technical Jargon

Technical jargon confuses non-experts and reduces clarity, making communication less effective.

## Solutions for Effective Communication

Tailoring messages and promoting honest dialogue helps overcome communication barriers.



# Stakeholder Identification and Mapping



# Who Are Stakeholders?

## Internal Stakeholders

Include employees, management, and safety officers involved directly in workplace operations.

## External Stakeholders

Regulators, local communities, and public who may be impacted by workplace risks.

## Importance of Identification

Identifying stakeholders ensures targeted communication and effective risk management participation.



# Do we know who are our stakeholders?

| Stakeholder Group           | Role in OHS                                | Preferred Communication Method            | Key Message Focus                                  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Employees / Workers         | Follow safe work practices; report hazards | Toolbox talks, posters, training sessions | Hazards, safe procedures, emergency actions        |
| Supervisors / Line Managers | Implement controls; monitor compliance     | Briefings, emails, dashboards             | Risk control measures, responsibilities, reporting |
| Senior Management           | Allocate resources; ensure compliance      | Reports, presentations, KPIs              | Legal obligations, strategic risk impacts          |
| Health & Safety Team        | Develop policies; conduct risk assessments | Technical reports, meetings               | Detailed hazard analysis, control hierarchy        |

# Do we know who are our stakeholders?

| Stakeholder Group             | Role in OHS                                | Preferred Communication Method           | Key Message Focus                                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Human Resources               | Integrate safety into HR processes         | Policy documents, onboarding materials   | Training requirements, incident reporting procedures |
| Maintenance / Technical Staff | Maintain equipment safety                  | Work orders, SOP manuals                 | Equipment hazards, lockout/tagout procedures         |
| Contractors / Subcontractors  | Comply with site-specific safety rules     | Induction sessions, safety briefings     | Site hazards, PPE requirements, emergency contacts   |
| <b>Regulatory Authorities</b> | Enforce compliance; audit safety practices | Official reports, compliance submissions | Legal compliance, incident notifications             |

# Do we know who are our stakeholders?

| Stakeholder Group   | Role in OHS                      | Preferred Communication Method | Key Message Focus                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Suppliers / Vendors | Provide safe materials/equipment | Specifications, contracts      | Safety standards, handling instructions      |
| Clients / Customers | Ensure service/product safety    | Reports, meetings              | Safety assurance, risk mitigation measures   |
| Community / Public  | Impacted by external risks       | Public notices, press releases | Environmental safety, emergency preparedness |

# Engagement Strategies

## Range of Strategies

Engagement strategies include informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, and empowering stakeholders effectively.

## Informing Stakeholder

Informing is one-way communication to raise awareness among stakeholders without expecting feedback.

## Collaborative Decision-Making

Collaborating involves joint decision-making and shared responsibility between stakeholders and organizers.

## Empowering Stakeholders

Empowering stakeholders means giving them control over outcomes to foster meaningful participation and trust.



# Designing a Risk Communication Plan



# Steps in Planning

## Define Clear Objectives

Set objectives that align with organizational goals and meet stakeholder needs for focused communication.

## Identify Target Audience

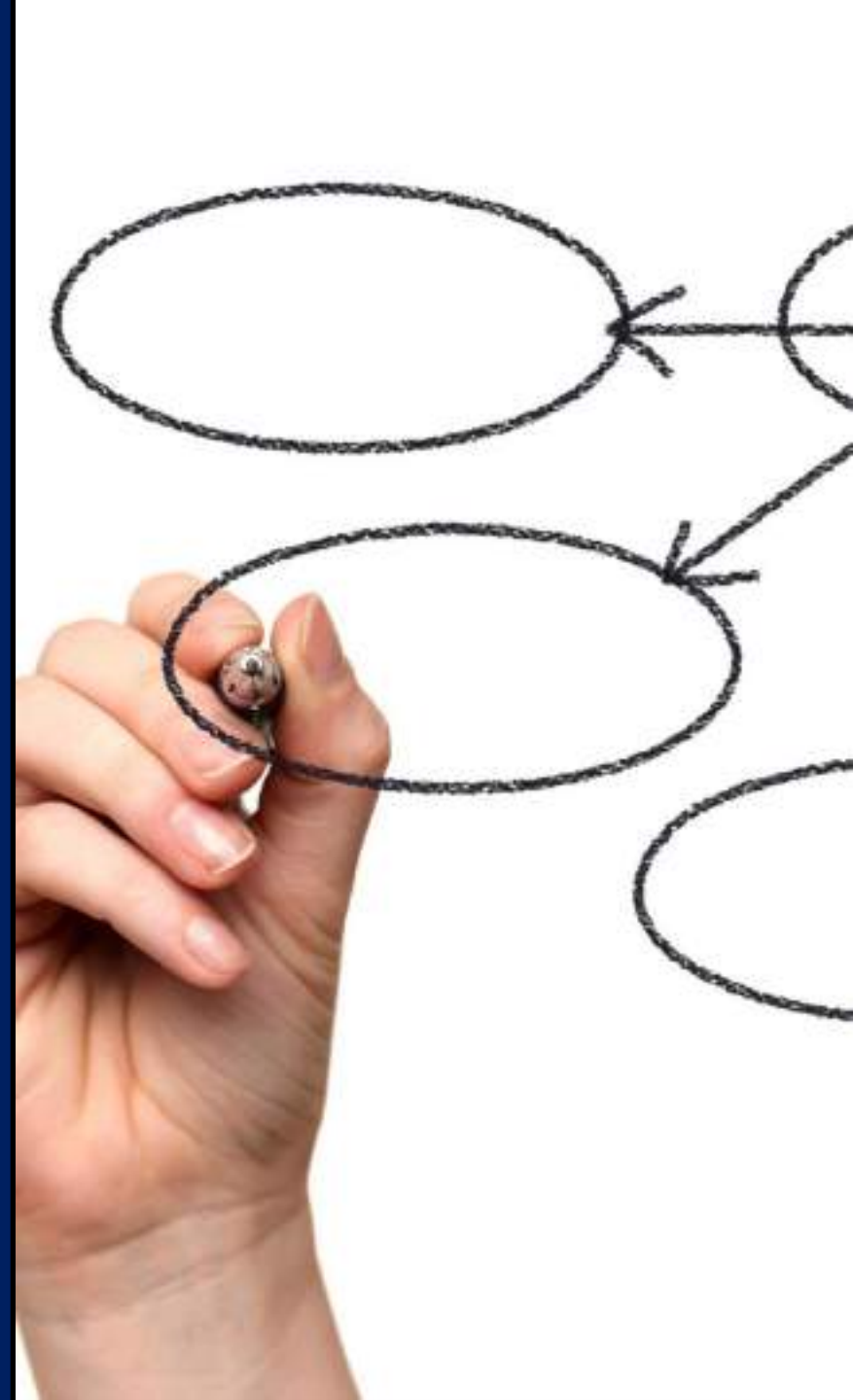
Recognize audience characteristics and information needs to tailor communication effectively.

## Select Communication Channels

Choose suitable channels that fit the audience preferences and communication context.

## Craft Clear Messages

Develop messages that are concise, clear, and actionable to ensure understanding and response.



# Engagement in Practice



# Interactive Techniques

## Town Halls for Dialogue ( and by who?)

Town halls foster open discussion and community input, enhancing direct stakeholder engagement and participation.

## Surveys for Quantitative Data

Surveys collect quantitative data on stakeholder perceptions and preferences to guide informed decision-making.

## Focus Groups for Insights

Focus groups provide qualitative insights through guided conversations among selected participants.



# Feedback Mechanisms

## Gathering Feedback

Collecting input via surveys, suggestion boxes, and digital platforms encourages stakeholder participation and voice.

## Building Trust

Responding to feedback shows respect and builds trust between organizations and stakeholders.

## Continuous Improvement

Effective feedback loops enable refining strategies and addressing new issues for ongoing progress.



# Conflict Resolution

## Managing Disagreements

Effective conflict resolution involves managing disagreements through active listening and mediation techniques.

## Preventing Escalation

Addressing conflicts promptly and respectfully helps prevent escalation and maintains trust among stakeholders.

## Key Conflict Skills

Clear communication, transparency, and empathy are essential skills for resolving disputes and fostering cooperation.

## Benefits of Resolution

Successful conflict resolution enhances relationships and supports effective risk management.



# Evaluation and Continuous Improvement



# Measuring Effectiveness

## Key Performance Indicators

KPIs measure stakeholder reach, message clarity, and response times to evaluate communication success.

## Feedback Loops

Feedback loops collect stakeholder input and satisfaction to improve communication strategies continuously.

## Communication Audits

Audits assess adherence to communication protocols and identify areas needing improvement.



# Improving Communication Over Time

## Learning from Past Experiences

Analyzing previous incidents helps improve future risk communication strategies effectively.

## Regular Reviews and Feedback

Stakeholder feedback and regular assessments identify communication gaps and opportunities.

## Adapting to Change

Updating communication methods to align with new technologies and regulations ensures effectiveness.

## Strengthening Trust and Resilience

Proactive communication builds organizational resilience and fosters stakeholder trust.



# Safety Communication Failures: Case Scenarios

EXPLORING INCIDENTS CAUSED BY  
COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWNS



# Case 1: Chemical Spill in a Manufacturing Plant

## Incident Overview:

A minor chemical leak in the plant led to hazardous exposure due to unclear communication.

## Communication Failures

The alert email contained technical jargon and lacked clear instructions, causing worker confusion.

## Consequences of Poor Communication

Two workers suffered chemical burns due to unawareness of the hazard and continued operations.

## Lessons Learned

Clear, concise language and multiple communication channels are vital during emergency alerts.



# Case 2: : Fire Drill Miscommunication

## Communication Channel Failure

Relying solely on the company intranet missed many employees who did not regularly check it.

## Confusion and Panic

Poor communication caused confusion and panic, leading to rushed evacuations and minor injuries.

## Need for Accessible Alerts

Urgent safety messages require direct and accessible methods like verbal announcements or SMS alerts.



# Case 3: : Confined Space Entry

## Lack of Written Confirmation

Absence of documented communication and gas monitoring led to unsafe entry into a confined space.

## Toxic Gas Hazard

Toxic gas inhalation occurred due to improper ventilation and lack of hazard verification before entry.

## Need for Safety Protocols

The case highlights the critical need for documented procedures, hazard assessments, and clear communication in confined space entry.



# Case 4: : PPE Policy Change

## **PPE Policy Update**

Management revised PPE requirements for a new process to enhance worker safety and protection.

## **Communication Breakdown**

Posting notices on bulletin boards failed to reach contractors and night-shift workers effectively.

## **Risk of Injury**

Lack of PPE usage increased the risk of injuries due to insufficient protection during operations.

## **Inclusive Communication**

Effective communication must engage all employee groups and ensure safety messages are acknowledged.



# Case 5: Machine Guarding Update Ignored

## Lack of Verbal Reinforcement

Procedural updates were only emailed, without discussion in toolbox talks or training sessions.

## Use of Outdated Methods

Workers continued unsafe practices due to absence of practical and verbal training.

## Consequences of Poor Communication

Two near-miss incidents occurred involving exposed moving parts highlighting risks of poor training.

## Importance of Interactive Training

Written communication must be supplemented with verbal and practical engagement for compliance.



# Case 6: Hazardous Material Labelling

## Updated Chemical Labels

Chemical containers had updated hazard labels, but changes were not communicated to all handlers.

## Communication Gap

Contractors were uninformed of label changes, leading to improper chemical handling and skin irritation cases.

## Importance of Inclusive Communication

Ensuring all personnel, including contractors, receive hazard updates is critical for safety



# Case 7: Emergency Exit Blockage

## Limited Notice Location

The emergency exit blockage notice was only posted in the cafeteria, missing other workplace areas.

## Shift Communication Gap

Night shift workers were not informed due to notice placement, causing confusion during evacuation.

## Need for Comprehensive Communication

Effective safety requires communication accessible to all shifts and work areas to prevent delays.



1. Why is risk communication important in OHS?
2. Who are the key stakeholders in workplace safety?
3. What happens if communication fails during an emergency?
4. Can you name one barrier to effective risk communication?



5. Why should we involve workers in safety decisions?
6. What's the difference between informing and engaging stakeholders?
7. What's one example of a poor communication practice in OHS?
8. Why is transparency critical in risk communication?



9. How can visuals help in communicating risks?
10. What role does trust play in stakeholder engagement?
11. Why is listening as important as speaking in risk communication?
12. How do you handle conflicting stakeholder interests?



13. Why is feedback essential in risk communication?
14. What's one tool for effective stakeholder engagement?
15. How does technology improve risk communication?
16. Why is risk communication considered a two-way process?



17. What is the biggest challenge in communicating risk to non-technical stakeholders?
18. What is the role of trust in risk communication?
19. What is the first step in effective stakeholder engagement?

20. Why do visuals matter in risk communication?
21. What is a common mistake when communicating risk during a crisis?
22. Why should cultural factors be considered in stakeholder engagement?
23. What happens when stakeholders feel excluded from safety decisions?



## 24. Why is consistency important in risk communication?



# Summary of Key Takeaways

## Core Principles of Communication

Transparency, clarity, and responsiveness are vital for effective risk communication and stakeholder trust.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Involving stakeholders through mapping and planning enhances participation and informed decision-making.

## Continuous Improvement

Ongoing evaluation and adaptation improve communication strategies and foster a culture of safety.



# Next: Lecture 7: Incident Investigation and Root Cause Analysis

## Summary:

Introduces methods for investigating incidents and identifying root causes to prevent recurrence.

## Learning Objectives:

- Conduct incident investigations systematically.
- Apply root cause analysis techniques.
- Recommend corrective actions based on findings.

