

April 2003

Successful Use of Risk Communication in  
Environmental Projects,  
Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Laboratory  
(NSWC DL)

Karen Coghlan, TAMS/Earth Tech  
Patricia Albert, NSWC DL



# RISK COMMUNICATION

---

“A particular way of presenting ideas, answering questions, and soliciting input that is non-threatening and that builds trust and credibility.”



# THE DOUBLE WHAMMY = LOW TRUST/HIGH CONCERN

---

Misperceptions

Ignorance

Complexity

Life concerns

Cynicism

Fear

Mistrust

# LOW TRUST/HIGH CONCERN

---

- Hear 15 – 18 % of what is said
- Do not tolerate a lot of information
- React intensely to non-verbal communication

## 2 PROJECTS TO TAKE PUBLIC:

---

- Upgrade of Biosafety Level-2 Laboratory to Biosafety Level-3
- Proposed infrared sensor testing

# BSL UPGRADE

---

- Action required – approval for activation
- Hundreds of operational BSL3 labs
- Changes primarily procedural - handling, control, access, decontamination, and personal protection

# INFRARED SENSOR TESTING

---

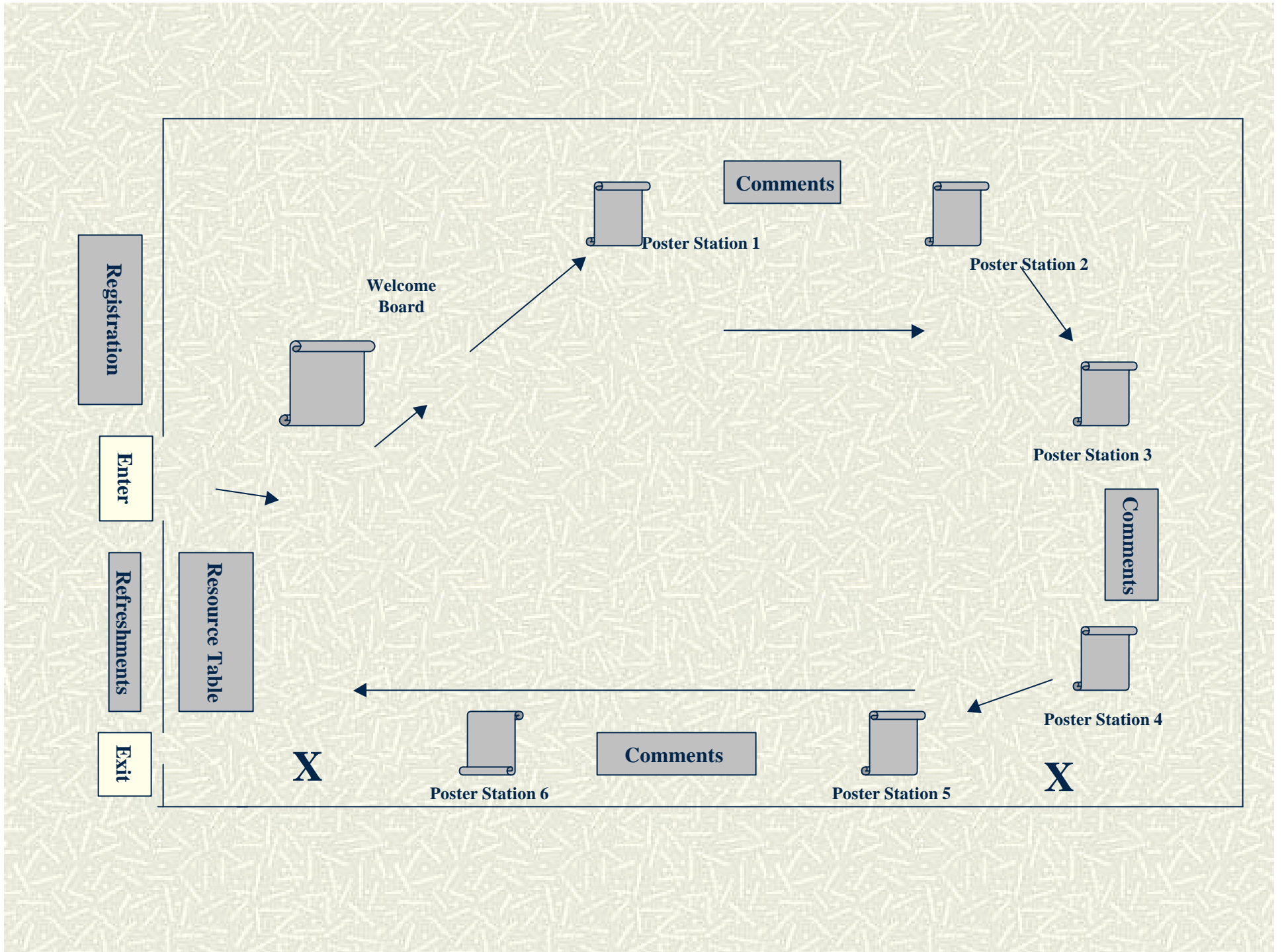
- Action required – release of substances that simulate chemical agents
- Simulants
  - found in industry and some household products
  - controlled releases
  - disburse in air

# DAHLGREN'S APPROACH

---

- Risk communication training
  - 2-day risk communication workshop
  - Training for entire team
- Planning and preparation
  - Questions and answers
  - Rehearsals
- Non-traditional format
  - Open house, poster station-style meetings





# BSL PUBLIC MEETING

---

- Preceded by an on-base meeting
- Moderately well attended
- Productive exchange
- High comfort level on the part of the project team

# DEAL WITH THAT DOUBLE WHAMMY

---

- Research
- Risk communication skills
- Planning/preparation
- Implementation