

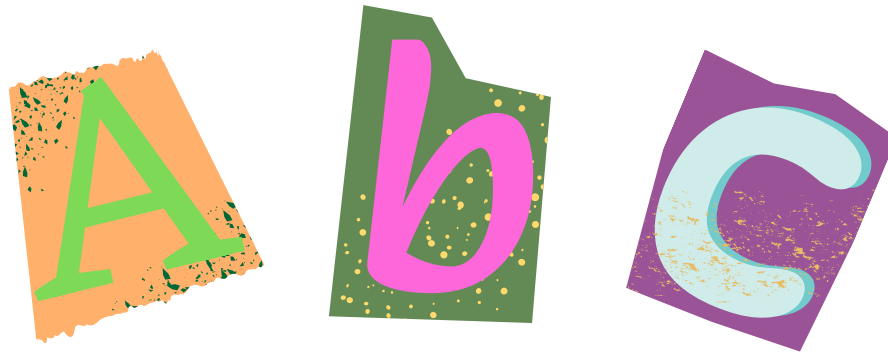


FEEL SAFE



COMMUNICATION 101

GUIDELINES FOR PROPER COMMUNICATION



Communication is a fundamental element of everyday life and the way we communicate determines how and what information we want to send to a recipient is received.

When we find ourselves in an emergency situation, knowing how to communicate can make all the difference in getting us to safety or calling for help. Furthermore, **proper communication is essential in all phases of the risk management cycle**. Just think how important the information activities of the Civil Protection, volunteers and all the bodies that are part of this system are to the population.

Communicating, however, is not easy! It is not enough to be clear about what information we want to share with others, but we must prepare an effective strategy to ensure that the messages we want to communicate are received and that the content is comprehensible to the interlocutor with whom we want to interact. In other words, **we have to make sure that communication is effective!**

For this reason, **we need to plan not only the content of the message, but also the medium and language to be used according to the type of audience we want to interact with**. For example, posting content on social media is very effective for talking to a group of young people, but less useful for communicating with their grandparents.



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ELEMENTS FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION:

Defining the objectives of communication: what message do we want to communicate? For example, in emergency situations, the Civil Protection aims to inform the population about how the situation is progressing and how the forces in the field are working to support the territory, while in the prevention and preparation phase it issues a weather forecast to warn of the possibility that extreme events may occur and that we must therefore implement a series of correct behaviours to protect ourselves.

Identifying the communication target: to whom do we want to send the message? For example, the Civil Protection organises school camps aimed at young people where training activities are carried out involving exploration of the territory and practical exercises, but also training meetings with experts to share more technical information and procedures.

Choice of means of communication: today we have many means of communication at our disposal and the choice of the right means must be made by taking into consideration the target audience and the phase of the risk management cycle in which we need to communicate. For example, are we sure that the internet connection will work during an emergency? Although social media may be the best way to communicate with young people, they may not always be usable and an alternative means of communication should be chosen in advance.

Setting the communication strategy: this point is fundamental because it allows planning the frequency of information. Do we need to send the same message once a day? Once a week? For example, in an emergency, the Civil Protection communicates the situation to the population at least once a day through a press conference. This means that every day the information to be transmitted must be collected, processed and communicated by a spokesperson.

Elaboration of the communication content: for communication to be effective, the right language must also be chosen according to the target group with which you want to interact. For example, to communicate with experts the Civil Protection will need to use a lot of technical terms, but to communicate the same information to the population or a specific group (e.g. children) it will need to use simpler language.