

## National disaster recovery principle 5: communicate effectively

### Speed read

- Good communication between affected communities and other partners is a crucial foundation of recovery. Where communication is strong, recovery goes well. Poor communication can hamper recovery.
- Recovery communication includes sending, gathering, managing and evaluating information, where: 'communication' is the process and 'information' is the message being sent or received.
- There are three broad rules for recovery communication.

### Key points

Communication in recovery should:

- begin as early as possible in a disaster
- include an event-specific website and/or other medium that shows all available information and is updated regularly
- specifically addresses the needs and concerns of local communities
- be expressed in clear, consistent, plain English
- be tailored to local communities and delivered to the various groups within communities
- be provided in easy to understand formats with the aid of visual comparisons
- include practical information and advice.

### Three rules for recovery communications:

#### 1. Is it relevant to the affected people?

People affected by disaster are overwhelmed by huge amounts of information. Following a disaster, people want to know:

- what is happening with the recovery process
- what support is available
- what they need to do to qualify for support
- what they can do if they have questions, concerns or complaints.

## 2. Is it clear?

After a disaster, people often have trouble remembering or understanding information. It is not appropriate to use jargon, overly complicated or technical language.

- Short, sharp amounts of relevant and practical information is best
- Ensure there is a clear call to action in the communication (what does the person actually have to do?)
- Ensure that there are formats available for people with a sensory impairment and/or people from CALD backgrounds. When using text-based communications, ensure the size of the text is readable.

## 3. Is it targeted?

The method of communication you use should fit the audience. Know your audience and the best way to reach them.

## Take action

- Use the [Communicating in Recovery Guide](http://bit.ly/RedCrossCommunicating) (Australian Red Cross 2010) (<http://bit.ly/RedCrossCommunicating>)
- Put up the [principles of communicating in recovery poster](http://bit.ly/RedCrossCommunicatingPrinciples) in your office or recovery centre (<http://bit.ly/RedCrossCommunicatingPrinciples>)
- Consider undertaking professional development: [Communicating in Recovery training program](http://bit.ly/RedCrossRecoveryTraining) (<http://bit.ly/RedCrossRecoveryTraining>)
- Use the Checklist: [Applying the principles post-disaster](http://bit.ly/RecoveryPrinciples) (SRRG 2018) ([bit.ly/RecoveryPrinciples](http://bit.ly/RecoveryPrinciples))

## More information

- [Community Recovery Handbook](#) (AIDR 2018)
- [Recovery Collection on the Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub](#)