



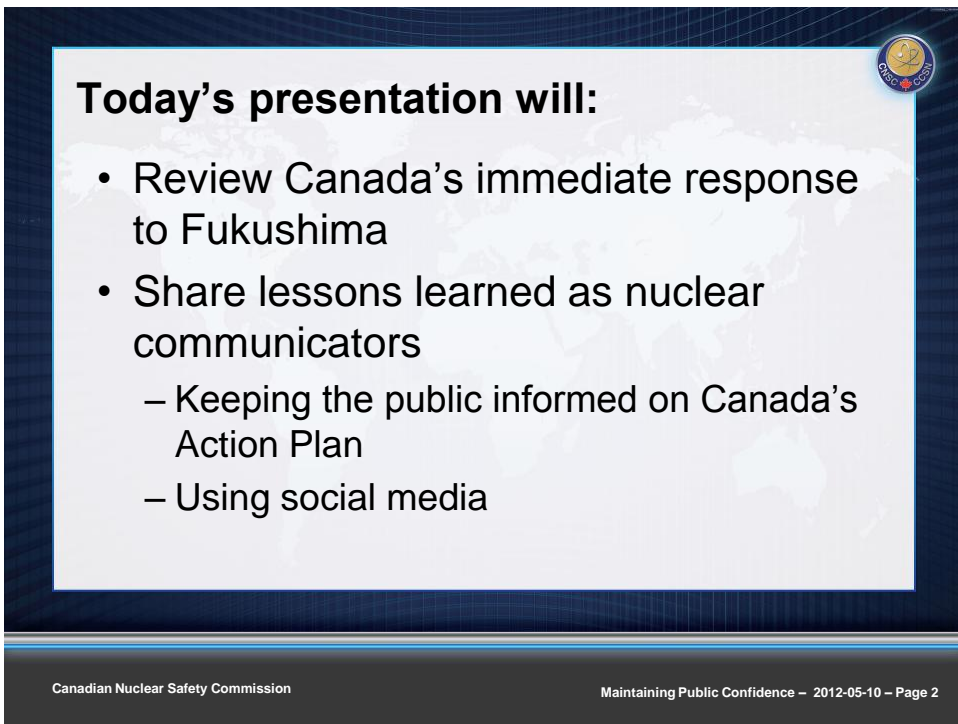
**Maintaining Public Confidence**  
Communicating the right information  
at the right time in a nuclear emergency

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 Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission    Commission canadienne de sûreté nucléaire





**Today's presentation will:**

- Review Canada's immediate response to Fukushima
- Share lessons learned as nuclear communicators
  - Keeping the public informed on Canada's Action Plan
  - Using social media

Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission

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# Canada's response to Fukushima was immediate, intense, comprehensive...

- Monitored events 24/7 for several weeks
- Disseminated information as the situation evolved (CNSC was first within the Government of Canada)
- Liaised with federal, provincial and municipal levels of government
- Supported Government of Canada response (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CNSC President)
- Communicated immediate regulatory actions to confirm nuclear power plant safety and follow-up

# ... supported by our Emergency Operation Center...

1:46 a.m. (EDT)  
Mag. 9 earthquake  
Strikes Japan



10:30 a.m. (EDT)  
First message sent to  
CNSC staff

5 p.m. (EDT)  
Staff mobilized for  
EOC staffing 24/7



10:00 a.m. (EDT)  
Decision to activate  
Emergency Operations  
Centre (EOC)



3:00 p.m. (EDT)  
First public statement  
issued



## ...and relying on key sources of information to ensure accuracy

### Japanese Agencies

Tokyo Electric Power Company  
 Japan Atomic and Industrial Forum  
 Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency

### Government of Canada

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade  
 Other Government Agencies (Health Canada, Food Inspection, Environment Canada)  
 Canadian Nuclear Association

### International Agencies

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)  
 U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

## Communication to the public began the day of the disaster...

- Information Updates issued daily as event developed from March 11 through April 1, then weekly or as significant developments occurred
- Daily coordination with other government departments
- Immediate creation of a Fukushima Web page
- Response to media requests for information



## ...as did internal communications to CNSC staff

- Daily messages to staff from March 11 to 28
- Articles in bi-weekly newsletter
- Weekly wrap-up emails from President

Current Issue | Past Issues | FAQs | Submit an Idea | Submit a Comment

### The NEO in action

Find out what the CNSC's Nuclear Emergency Organization is doing during the nuclear emergency in Japan.

On Friday, March 11, 2011, at 2:46 p.m. local time (1:46 a.m. eastern), a magnitude 9 earthquake struck Japan. The earthquake triggered a 23-foot tsunami that devastated the country's northeast coast and damaged generators at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Following established protocol, the [International Atomic Energy Agency](#) notified CNSC staff of the earthquake and potential damage to Tokyo Electric Power's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

According to the CNSC's [Emergency Response Plan](#), the Nuclear Emergency Organization (NEO) was activated on the morning of Friday, March 11, 2011 in order to monitor the situation and centralize communication in and out of the CNSC. The [Emergency Operations Centre](#), on the 3rd floor of 260 Slater, was prepared for use by NEO staff and the first shift, comprised of Ben Poulet, Greg Rzentkowski,

#### Get Updates

We understand that, as employees of the CNSC, you may be asked questions about the current events in Japan, as well as nuclear safety in Canada. As Canadian citizens – our stakeholders – you may have similar questions.

The CNSC posts updates to their [Web site](#). Japanese authorities are reporting on the status of their nuclear power plants to the IAEA. Visit the [IAEA Web site](#) - [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) for the most recent updates.

In addition, the following resources may be of interest to you:

- [The Japanese Earthquake - A Canadian Perspective: Questions and Answers](#)

## Canada's Action Plan was presented publicly using interactive fora

- Public proceedings - live Webcasts on:
  - CNSC Fukushima Task Force Report and Action Plan (three rounds of public consultation)
  - External Advisory Committee Report
- Other initiatives included:
  - IRRS mission to Canada
  - Participating in ongoing national and international dialogue



## Our experience resulted in five key “lessons learned” for communicating nuclear issues in a crisis

1. The public needs a single, reliable source that harmonizes critical information
2. Be prepared, be prepared, be prepared!
3. Technical information requires careful, consistent interpretation
4. Losing sight of day-to-day issues carries considerable risk
5. Social media has its merits if used with awareness

## Lesson 1: In crisis, the public will be looking for a single, reliable source

CNSC recognized and quickly implemented delivery of reliable, timely and objective information

- Adapted quickly to provide resources to respond to the situation
  - Staff dedicated to respond
  - Abbreviated approval processes
- Constantly monitored evolution of crisis
  - Respond quickly with “real-time” information
  - Plain language
- Provided timely information to bolster public confidence
  - Slow responses, cryptic language feeds perception that information is being concealed

## Lesson 2: Be prepared!



The CNSC is working on:

- Enhancing readiness (crisis site, prepackaged information, building capability, training spokespersons, etc.)
- Revisiting Web content for plain language and full coverage of key topics
- Participating actively in emergency exercises
- Ensuring open lines of communication with all stakeholders
- Integrating social media as part of our tool box by launching a Facebook page, and developing a YouTube channel and Twitter account

## Lesson 3: Communicating technical information has unique challenges



For example, on radiation:

- Get the facts right, especially on dose rates
- Provide examples and a clear interpretation
- Communicate as a country – work collaboratively with health agencies and share information
- Set the record straight on common misconceptions
- Be careful of use of INES scale ratings and comparisons (e.g., Chernobyl)

## Lesson 4: Don't lose sight of other day-to-day responsibilities



- Even in a crisis, there are critical ongoing operational requirements
- Coordination at the senior management level, and appropriate messaging to staff are essential to support regular operations

## Lesson 5: Social media has its merits if used with awareness



- Information can circulate very quickly
- Traditional corporate communications approaches with lengthy approvals often “broken”
- Allows you to get your message across quickly enough to preserve credibility as an information source
- Supports understanding of what content people are seeking

## There are important factors to ensure social media success

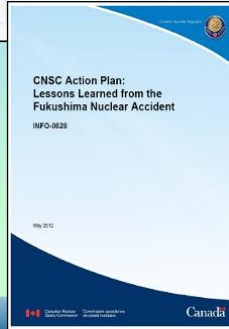
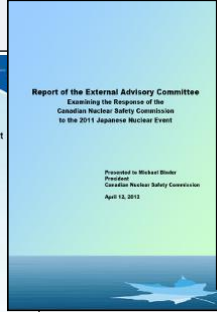
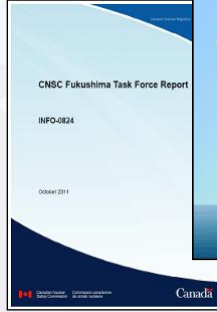
- Senior management has to buy in
- Dedicated staff need to be in the loop
- Immediate response is key
- Establish credibility and social media followers before crisis!
- Use multi-platforms and tailor messaging

## Closing thoughts....

*Building trust with the public is everyone's job – not just the regulator's*



# Questions?



[nuclearsafety.gc.ca](http://nuclearsafety.gc.ca)