

Date: September 14, 2018
To: All Members
From: Board of Directors
Re: 2018 Stakeholder Surveys and Program Evaluations

Surveys of the three stakeholder audiences (Excavators, Public Officials and Emergency Responders) were completed in the first quarter of 2018. The final reports are posted in the program documentation folder for 2018 and in the general folder for studies and evaluations. The highlights are summarized below:

Changes made to the survey questions and reports in 2018:

1. Excavators (table 8) and Emergency Responders (table 10) - respondents in this study were presented a more comprehensive and descriptive list of conditions that may indicate a gas leak than in previous studies. This was intended to more closely match the list of conditions contained in the materials
2. Excavators Survey question 13 shown in table 10 - the phrase “close pipeline valves” was revised to “attempt to operate pipeline valves” in the list of actions to take in the event of a pipeline leak. This was intended to more closely match the wording in the messages contained in the materials
3. All Surveys - the responses to the open-ended questions regarding the need for additional information and if they had suggestions for improving communications were listed in the reports and were not grouped into categories as in previous years. The purpose of this change was to provide additional detail about what the stakeholders want to gain further insight into their needs

Overall observations:

1. Excavators are much less likely to operate pipeline valves in the event of an emergency than they were in 2014
2. Many areas indicated improvement. However, results for some questions declined more than the margin of error. This may be influenced by the number of new stakeholders included in the previous year’s mailings as those lists are used for sample selection (i.e. about 40% of the emergency responders were new to the program in 2017)
3. The preference for electronic communications continues to increase
4. The additional information needed by stakeholders is widely varied
5. The percentage of stakeholders feeling like they need additional information is declining
6. The percentage of stakeholders offering suggestions for improving the communications is declining

Recommendations for program changes and improvements:

1. ER – initiate email communications with CEMAs containing a link to an online form where stakeholders can submit specific requests for additional information
2. PO - Include postage paid business reply envelope and a reply card in the packet to facilitate specific requests for additional information
3. EX – add a space or an item in the readership survey in the back of the magazine where excavators can request additional specific information

Additional considerations and options for future modifications to the surveys or methodology:

1. Review Existing Survey Questions for Improvement Opportunities and Efficiencies
 - a. Evaluate redundant questions and those that yield non-actionable results
 - b. Review verbatims to determine any that are research-related or that point to trends that would benefit from inclusion in the survey
 - c. Review the screening questions and process to prevent unqualified responses that may dilute the data.
2. Enhance Survey Questions and Analysis to Better Assess Behavior Change and Program Impact
 - a. Include additional behavioral-based questions in surveys (e.g., knowledge check, expected behavior, past behavior, engagement with communication, propensity to share information, etc.)
 - b. Analyze data by those who recall receiving communication versus those who do not to understand program impact and set the stage for improvement
3. Conduct Pulse Research
 - a. Conduct more frequent and possibly smaller scale pulse research to better understand audience information needs, knowledge gaps, impact of communication, opportunities for communication enhancements, channel preferences, etc.
 - b. Introduce qualitative methodologies (e.g., in-depth interviews, focus groups, etc.) to better understand target audience perspective and knowledge gaps

The recommendations identified above will be implemented. The additional considerations and options for future modifications to the surveys or methodology will be reviewed with the membership. The results of these discussions will be documented in the minutes of the member meetings.