

ON-SITE ACTIVITIES

DESCRIPTION

On-site activities, such as site tours and observation decks, help people to understand the site.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY?

No.

MAKING IT WORK

WHEN TO USE

On-site activities can be used at any point in the Superfund process to educate area residents or highlight progress at a site. For example, you may wish to hold an on-site activity when a particular phase of work gets underway. Use celebrations or *Special Events* to involve your public, but be aware of safety precautions. People often understand technical information much more easily when they can visualize it, and familiarity with the unknown is one of the best ways to allay fears.

HOW TO USE

Anxiety and frustration over the Superfund program often result because people feel intimidated by the technical nature of site activities and do not see progress being made at Superfund sites. On-site activities help you to explain site activities and demonstrate progress. On-site activities should not mean a lot of extra work for you or other members of the site team. If an observation deck is built at the site, incorporate an afternoon into one of your planned community visits to be available on the deck to meet with local residents; you might even make a *Special Event* out of the grand opening for the deck. Coordinate with the RPM in such activities so that community members can have direct contact with him/her and to help explain what is happening at the site. Invite the local *Media* to tour the site with you. Set up an on-site information center if the site is centrally located in the community. During site tours, hand out written materials such as fact sheets to summarize the aspect of site activity you are highlighting. Site tours can also include a walking tour through the exclusion zones, and a perimeter tour to show security and monitoring devices. Try to include activities for children.

EXAMPLE

One CIC and RPM provided a site update presentation to a county's Grand Jury panel. Although the presentation originally only included graphics, maps, and slides of the former mine site, most of the audience stated an interest in seeing the site first hand. Two weeks later, the RPM and CIC led a site tour of 25 people. The tour included a visit to the Elem Indian Colony, adjacent to the site, where EPA was completing removal of contaminated soil. Background information was provided, such as a chronology of EPA activities and fact sheets. Both local newspapers published positive articles about the cleanup.

TIPS

- Do not make extra work for the site team. You do not have to come up with new demands for them; just plan activities on-site that you would normally hold off-site.
- Be creative. Design on-site activities that specifically address community concerns.
- Involve the media. Take advantage of on-site activities to highlight site successes.



[See Special Events, Tab 38](#)



[See Media, Tab 25](#)

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- Be sure you know what you want to accomplish. Avoid creating an on-site activity just because it would be “cool.”
- Involve the community. Ask the community for suggestions.

RELATED TOOLS/RESOURCES IN THE TOOLKIT

- [Communication Strategies, Tab 3](#)
- [Informal Activities, Tab 20](#)
- [Media, Tab 25](#)
- [Public Availabilities/Poster Sessions, Tab 30](#)
- [Videos, Tab 45](#)

ATTACHED ITEMS WITHIN THIS TOOL

- Attachment 1: Ideas on How to Involve the Affected Residents
- Attachment 2: On-Site Activity Planning Checklist

ATTACHMENT 1: IDEAS ON HOW TO INVOLVE THE AFFECTED RESIDENTS

- During your community visits, ask the residents what they would like to see on site.
- When the observation deck is constructed, invite residents to the Grand Opening.
- Inform local realtors and civic groups that one day a month the observation deck will be open to new residents in the community, guided by the CIC.
- Inform local schools that you are available to them for student field trips to the site.
- If the site is stable, hold a poster session/public availability at the site.
- If a particular landmark associated with the site is being torn down, invite members of the community to participate in this on-site event. Be sensitive to historical value, however. Fanfare over the destruction of a landmark could be a difficult symbol for some people.
- Invite members of the community to an on-site activity which will highlight progress.
- If security is a major concern of the residents, invite them to an open house to show residents plans for securing the site and how they will be carried out.
- If appropriate, set up an on-site information center, and inform residents of the opening.
- If you are giving site tours, invite the residents to show them how the contaminants will be removed from the site and properly disposed of according to environmental regulations.
- Invite the residents to any on-site activity that would mark major milestones, or completions, such as the “Changing of the Signs” ceremony.

ATTACHMENT 2: ON-SITE ACTIVITY PLANNING CHECKLIST

To plan an on-site activity, follow these simple steps:

- ___ Identify the message you wish to convey and why you are holding the event.
- ___ Identify the “hook” — what is it that will motivate people to attend?
- ___ Identify your target audience (local residents, media, local officials).
- ___ Check with the Site Team to make sure there are no safety concerns you must consider, that the Team agrees the activity is appropriate given conditions at the site, where on the site it is possible to hold your activity.
- ___ Pick a date and time — making sure to consider the community calendar to avoid competing with a local event, such as a summer craft fair, fall festival, or popular vacation time in the community.
- ___ Make arrangements for other speakers (*e.g.*, the RPM, a local college engineering or science professor) and advertisements for the event.
- ___ Prepare any educational or media packets that you will have available at the event.
- ___ Mail information out to community members, if appropriate, such as a fact sheet describing the phase of work you will be highlighting at the site.
- ___ Publicize, publicize, publicize; one mailing will not be enough. Consider door hangers, public service announcements, announcements at local civic clubs and church bulletins.
- ___ Verify all arrangements with speakers and workers who will be assisting at the event.
- ___ Host the event.
- ___ Hold a “Lessons Learned” meeting.