

ABSTRACT
PUBLIC WARNINGS FOR PROTECTIVE ACTION

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Presented to the Session on Risk Perception and Communication

At the First Annual DHS University Network Summit on Research and Education

Sponsored by the Office of University Programs

Science and Technology Directorate

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Washington, D.C.

March 16, 2007

This presentation synthesizes the conclusions from the published research record of over 500 research publications that span over 50 years of research in the social and behavioral sciences regarding public response to warnings of the pending impact of natural, technological, human made, and terrorism hazards and disasters including evacuation of the World Trade Center Towers prior to their collapse on September 11th. This research record includes the range of public protective actions, e.g., evacuation, shelter in-place, and others as well as for public response in the context of communities and occupant response in high rise buildings. The findings of this research base are synthesized in terms of the basic social and social psychological processes that underlie human warning response across all hazard types. The findings are presented in terms of how to use these principles of human response in a warning context to maximize the probability of the public (in communities as well as in high rise buildings) taking timely and appropriate protective actions prior to impact. Topics covered include, among others, public notification, warning content, warning communication channels, and how to effectively manage public mis-information in an actual warning event.