



Air Quality Action Days Focus Group Protocol and Questions

- Objectives** To get input from current Air Quality Action Days participants about:
- Their level of participation over the past few years; specifically to determine if there have been and significant changes in their level of participation in light of fewer action days and, if so, why.
 - How changes to the Air Quality Action Days program based on the new EPA standard may affect their interest and participation in the future.
 - What would be the most effective ways of communicating changes about the Air Quality Action Days program.
- Participants** Participants will be recruited from the list of 500+ Air Quality Action Days participants based on the following criteria:
- Location (Baltimore and Washington regions)
 - Sector (public and private sector employers)
 - Size (large and small employers)
 - Other (environmental and health care organizations)
- Scheduling** Thursday, February 16, 2006
5:00-7:00 pm
Location: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- Thursday, February 23, 2006
5:00-7:00 pm
Location: Baltimore Metropolitan Council
- Provisions**
- Food and beverages will be provided
 - A \$50 honorarium will be provided to each participant
- Agenda** 5:00-5:30 PM
- Greet and welcome participants as they arrive.
 - While they are eating...Harriet West, Managing Director, Clean Air Partners, will explain the purpose of the focus group, including how the new EPA standard will likely affect the Air Quality Action Days program (include a visual showing the change from for the exceedence level at 85 ppb/Code Orange vs. Code Red and a graph showing likely changes in the number of Air Quality Action Days based on historical data).
 - Harriet will introduce Cliff Fox, Virginia Commonwealth University.
 - Cliff will explain how the focus group will be conducted.
 - Focus group participants will introduce themselves.
- 5:30-7:00 PM
- VCU staff will conduct the focus group sessions and tape-record each session.



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1. Past Participation (~25 minutes)

- For the past 3 years, there were only a couple of Code Red/Air Quality Action Days each summer, compared to 6 or 7 days per season in the 90's...how has this affected your level of participation? (Are they, the company, and employees more aware of air quality issues and related actions?...do they take action when there is an Air Quality Action Day?...do they take action on Code Red or Code Orange days if no Air Quality Action Day is called for?)
- Why has your level of participation increased or decreased?
- What does your organization typically do on a Code Red/Air Quality Action Day? (Prompt if necessary...send email notification to employees, postpone mowing or painting, postpone early morning refueling of fleet vehicles, lobby display, raise flag, encourage on-site lunches)
- What "value" does your organization get from participating in Air Quality Action Days?
- What is the process for participation within your organization...who makes the decision to participate?
- How do you measure success...do you track participation or are there other tangible results?
- Are you or any of your employees, friends, family affected by poor air quality...asthmatic, heart/lung disease, etc?

2. Future Participation Based on New EPA Standard (~40 minutes)

- If the number of Air Quality Action Days increased to 20 or more per year, how do you think this would affect your organization's interest and participation?
- Why would participation increase or decrease?
- How many days per year do you think your organization would be most likely to participate?
- What could Clean Air Partners do to encourage participation? (Prompt if necessary...special recognition, awards, media attention, other?)
- Here are a couple of options we are considering for restructuring the Air Quality Action Days program (distribute a brief summary of each option...calling AQAD on Code Orange, eliminating AQAD and strengthening Code Red and Code Orange messaging, calling AQAD based on a multi-day episode, or obtaining commitments for 10 or more Code Orange/Code Red days per summer). What are your thoughts about each of these options...what do you like, what don't you like, etc. Are there other options we should consider?

3. Communication (~20 minutes)

- What is the best way to communicate changes about the Air Quality Action Days program to your organization...email, internal newsletter articles, on-site visit/presentation, meeting/workshop, other?
- Who in your organization should be contacted...Air Quality Action Days coordinator, HR director, owner, CEO, facilities, other?
- In your opinion, what are the most credible sources of information about the health effects of air quality...EPA, American Lung Association, physicians/hospitals/medical community, others?
- Other than the fax/email notifications you receive through Clean Air Partners, how else do you get information about air quality issues...radio ads, television/weather report, web sites, other?

4. Other (~5 minutes)

- Is there anything we didn't discuss that would be helpful to Clean Air Partners in making changes to the Air Quality Action Days program?