

**RISK COMMUNICATION AND HEAVY METALS:
HOW TO OVERCOME THE INDUSTRY'S BAD RAP**

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The appearance of certain metals in petroleum waste streams has time and again resulted in public concern and outrage. These concerns often arise irrespective of metal concentrations, potential for exposure, likelihood of human health effects, and geographic location in the world. However, this does not mean that these situations cannot be anticipated and either avoided or quickly remedied once they do occur. There are a number of common issues related to metals and perceived risk which cause this outrage. It is not an irrational response of the "uninformed" as it is often characterized.

In this presentation we will explore the health and environmental issues surrounding three common metals (arsenic, lead, and mercury), and the outrage caused by the way that the petroleum industry often deals with them. We will provide tools to help with early diagnosis of this outrage and its causes, and some successful strategies for building long-term trust and credibility. Some of the more successful strategies we will discuss include, talking with key stakeholders early and often, working with credible sources of information, working with agencies, and having clear and sustainable key messages. We will end with a case study on mercury in offshore oil and gas streams.