

Tips – External and Internal Information ©2012 Catherine Hansen-Stamp

- Tell the truth, provide accurate information and use **Common Sense**
- Anticipate what the audience needs to know
- Pictures can sometimes speak louder than words
- Inform with objective facts.
- Use language your audience will understand
- Your audience will judge you by the style, grammar and tone of your message
- Don't Use the "S" word; be careful of this variation: "safety"
- Be cautious of superlatives (of the highest kind or quality) or absolute statements
- Don't promise, assure, ensure, or guarantee
- Avoid hyperbole (exaggeration), ambiguity or vague statements
- Read and re-read your material with the eye (and ear) of your intended audience
- Provide a "balance of information": positive aspects of program as well as risks and participant/parent responsibilities
- Be consistent in your message among various pieces of information
- Say what you mean and mean what you say
- Don't attempt to characterize the law or your legal obligation/s (unless, of course, that is required by the law)

Additionally, in the case of internal information:

- Address the notion that instructor judgment may override a practice or policy, in appropriate cases
- Consider what you can realistically expect of your staff and consider industry practices
- Define terms and be consistent (guideline, standard, practice, policy, procedure, etc.)
- Avoid unnecessary rigidity
- Avoid overwhelming your staff
- Have a manner and method to receive and consider staff input on a practice or policy
- Don't develop a written or unwritten policy if you are not ready to embrace it
- If it is a guideline, does it read like a guideline? Consider how it may be interpreted later (by a court for example)
- Re-write and revise, as necessary. Do not let your written or unwritten practices or policies become out of date or inaccurate. These are live documents!