

PR At The Doorstep

FACE TO FACE: Greeting the Homeowner

**September 14, 2007
Carolinas' Chapter SEE
Annual Conference and Meeting**

**Hosted by: Ken Eltschlager
Office of Surface Mining**

The Scenarios

- ◆ **WHERE?**
In the yard,
outside the house
- ◆ **WHO?**
Employee and
Homeowner
- ◆ **WHEN?**
Before and After
a Blast
- ◆ **WHAT?**
Construction,
Quarry, and Mining
Blasts



Right Way

- ◆ **Friendly greeting**
- ◆ **Explains the purpose of the visit**
- ◆ **Discusses the whereabouts of the blast**
- ◆ **Knows company policy**
- ◆ **Invites the owner to view the recording**
- ◆ **Provide business card**



Wrong Way

- ◆ **Poorly dressed**
- ◆ **No greeting**
- ◆ **No purpose of the visit**
- ◆ **Unknowing of the whereabouts of the blast**
- ◆ **Indifferent to the owner**
- ◆ **Inconsiderate of property**
- ◆ **Dirty clothes**



PR at the Doorstep

- ◆ **Both the right and wrong ways are obvious, so why do we still have poor PR with the neighbors?**
- ◆ **We will explore some actual occurrences and discuss better ways of communicating**
- ◆ **Home Base:**

“We are professionals interested in sound blasting practices that will minimize impacts to you and your house.” (We do it right!)

Scenario 1

UNSCHEDULED BLASTING OPERATIONS

Important:

- ▶ **Project confidence**
- ▶ **Know the project details**
- ▶ **Answer the question!**
- ▶ **Know the right answer**
- ▶ **Be able to go a little further than the answer requires**



Scenario 2

I requested a Pre-blast survey and did not receive one.

- 1. You need to contact _____ for that request.**
- 2. I suspect vibrations will be low today, but we will get you one as soon as possible.**
- 3. I will call for someone immediately.**
- 4. Too bad you missed the boat.**



Scenario 3

I have a special needs person inside that startles easily. What can you do to help?



- 1. We sound a horn before each blast. Please let us know if it is not loud enough to fore-warn you.**
- 2. We can call you in advance.**
- 3. What is a good time to blast that will work best for you?**
- 4. We will send someone daily to notify you.**

Scenario 4

MONITORING A CONSTRUCTION BLAST

Results:

- **Damage claim filed**
- **Consultant hired**
- **Company,**
- **time lost**
- **Credibility lost**



Scenario 4 (cont)

- ◆ **Discussion – How to handle differently**
 - ▶ **Yes you will feel the blast, normal, but damage will not occur**
 - ▶ **Sorry, sometimes that happens, did anything break? No? Good I will note the instance on the record.**
- ◆ **Results – no claim**

Scenario 5

I have a expensive glass collection inside. If some fall off the shelves and break, will you be responsible?

- 1. Yes we would. I will alert the blaster of your concern.**
- 2. We only plan on blasting today, could you take them off the shelf for a few hours?**
- 3. We have insurance to cover the cost.**
- 4. We are allowed to shake your house so you better glue them down.**



Scenario 6

I have be raising dogs for 20 years. Since you started blasting my dogs will not mate anymore! What are you going to do about it?



- 1. Oh apologies, I am not familiar with that subject, may I get back to you?**
- 2. Gee... never heard that one before.**
- 3. Sorry but we are within the regulatory limits.**
- 4. Lady you are barking up the wrong tree.**

Scenario 7

WARNING SIGNALS

Important:

- **All personnel on site should know the project constraints.**
- **Act affirmatively.**

Poor responses:

- **That wasn't so bad.**
- **Wow that was a close one!**
- **We are not required to give a warning.**



Scenario 7a

CHILDREN

*Same place, same day
about 3 PM.*

*The owner, employee
and foreman are
standing in the front
yard waiting for the
warning signal. School
bus stops, kids get off
and proceed to play in
the tree line 350' from the blast as the adults
watch. The superintendent arrives and
notices the kids. He asks the employee
when the kids are to be cleared?*



Scenario 7a (cont.)

Actual Response?

They play there all the time, but they are off the permit/work area.

Better Response?

When the 5 minute warning sounds we ask them to get in the house.

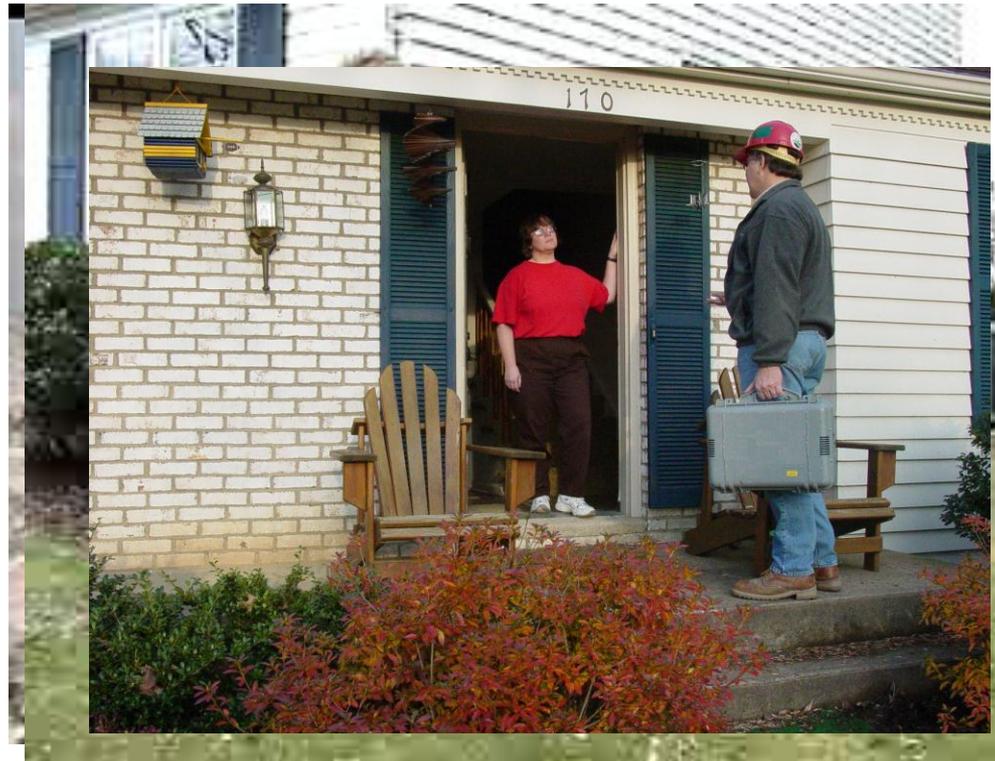


Scenario 8

RESIDENT'S INSIDE PERSPECTIVE

Good Points:

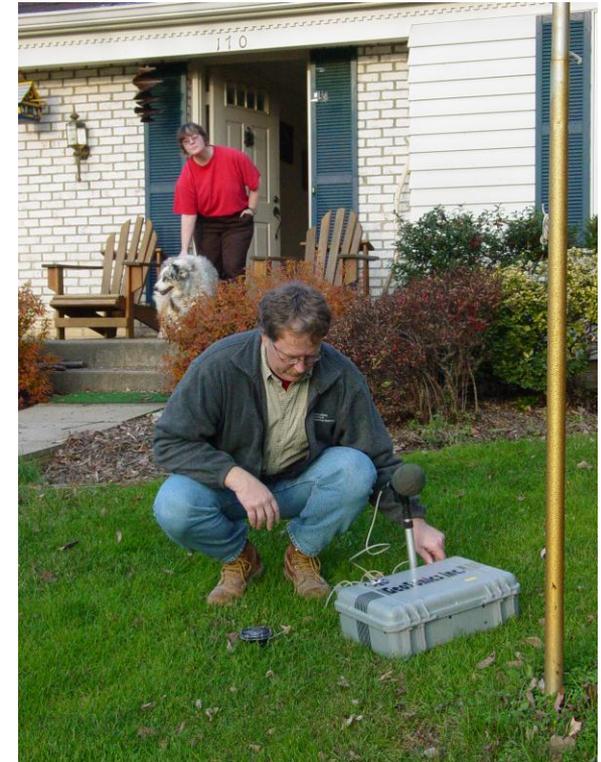
- **Vibrations are often stronger inside than outside**
- **Check the vibration frequency in addition to the PPV and dB**
- **Never downplay a person's personal perception!**



Scenario 9

Excuse me, you are taking these readings in my yard, may I have a copy of the seismogram?

- 1. Yes you may, I will print one when the seismograph is finished processing the data.**
- 2. I cannot give you one now because the seismograph does not have a printer, but I will when I get a printout.**
- 3. I am not authorized to give you a copy, but you may view the record at the mine office.**
- 4. If you write a letter to the company they may give you a copy.**
- 5. No.**



Scenario 10

SEISMOGRAPH LOCATION

Good Points:

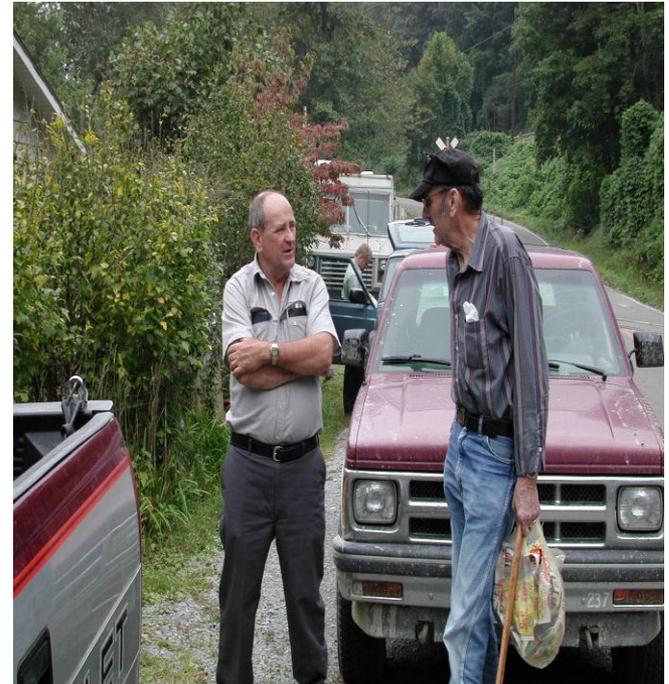
1. **The industry standard is to measure outside.**
2. **The rules require us to monitor ground vibrations.**
3. **Intrusive to owner.**
4. **If owner insists, come back with other expertise.**



Scenario 11

I was watching the seismograph operator yesterday carefully anchor the sensor to the ground. Seemed like he did well until the end. After the blast, he walked over to the sensor and booted it out of the ground with his steal toed shoes and sent it rolling across the ground. Will that affect the next reading?

Should not, but that is a improper way to handle the equipment. Thank you for bringing it to my attention, I will speak to the operator immediately.



Scenario 12

DAMAGE ALLEGATIONS

What happens?

- ▶ The blaster just acknowledged a crack in the sidewalk
- ▶ The homeowner heard an acknowledgement of doing the damage

Better response:

- ▶ I see the crack, we will have someone look at it.
- ▶ Based on the historical information at this site, the concrete should not have broken
- ▶ Look at the dirt in the crack, it has been there a long time.



Scenario 13

You cracked my footer!

**Really? How do you know?
You can't see your footer.**

Well neither can you!



- **Expect the unexpected comment .**
- **Damages may be obvious or unobvious.**
- **Always seek expert advise when visual observations are not possible.**

Scenario 14

ODD INSTANCES

See that!! Every time you blow the whistle my dog goes nuts. This time, you saw him, go right through the screen door. I want you to pay for it!!



Lady if you cannot control your dog, its not my problem.

Well we'll just see about that, I am going to call the state inspector.



Conclusion

- **Remember the audience!**
- **Know your companies policies and procedures.**
- **Be polite, sincere and objective.**



Conclusion

- **Misstatements and poor actions will cost you! (or your insurance carrier, which in turn, costs you!)**



- **Remember Home Base:**

“We are professionals interested in sound blasting practices that will minimize impacts to you and your house”

Production Credits

- ◆ **Producer: Kenneth Eltschlager**
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

- ◆ **Co-Producer: David Harrison**
Dr. Edward J. Walters and Assoc., Inc.

- ◆ **Acknowledgements**
 - ▶ *William Shuss, PA DEP – Role Playing*
 - ▶ *Judy Eltschlager – Role Playing*
 - ▶ *Kelly Eltschlager – Camera Operator*
 - ▶ *Karrie Bernhard – Graphical Design*