Clear Language: What is it?

Clear Language is a term that is often used to describe writing that is simple, direct, and familiar. It is presented in ways that aid the reader in understanding the text and meaning of a document. The purpose of a clear language document is to communicate effectively, while keeping the needs of the reader in mind.

Writing is an important part of communication. Good writing is 'clear thinking on paper'. It allows others to understand the message. The ability to write clearly is a skill that we can all improve.

There are many ways in which one idea can be expressed using clear language. There is no right or wrong way to state an idea, as long as it is done as clearly as possible. For this reason, it is important to make sure that the audience is always kept in mind.

Components of Clear Language:

Style: Information is written in a positive tone and uses references that the readers will identify with.

Format: Design elements help the readers move through the information easily.

Organization: Readers can easily find the information they need.

Text choice: Words that the audience will easily understand are chosen and more complex terms are explained.

Clear Language does not:

- include overly simplistic vocabulary

- use improper language or grammar

- patronize

- portray information inaccurately

- lose meaning by being incomplete

Clear Language does:

- put the audience first

- enhance writing style, content, organization and format

- promote honest and open interaction

- improve service through forms, documents, letters and signs that are easily understood

Please Note:

It is common for people to mistake using clear language for simplistic text. Clear language uses a style of writing that is direct and relevant to the reader. It is easy to understand and easy to follow, while retaining all important information.