

## **Section 1.17 Lone Worker and Remote Worker Safety**

### **1. Scope**

This section sets forth requirements for the lone and remote worker safety program. This section shall be used for all Reclamation employees who work or travel alone or who work in remote locations with limited or non-existent communications, or locations with limited emergency service response. If a contractor has lone or remote workers, the contractor must establish their own lone worker and remote worker safety program. The contractor's safety plan shall include the contractor's lone worker and remote worker safety program.

### **2. Responsibilities**

#### **a. Reclamation Chief, Safety and Occupational Health**

- Shall review these section every 3 years, or more frequently as needed.
- Shall respond to policy and programmatic discrepancies in a timely manner.

#### **b. Regional Safety Managers**

- Shall assist supervisors and managers in the establishment, use, and maintenance of localized lone worker and remote worker safety programs.

#### **c. Area Office Managers**

- Shall develop and implement a lone worker and remote worker safety program in their office if they have employees who perform work as outlined in paragraph 1.17.1, Scope, of this section.
- Shall provide all needed equipment, systems, check-in protocols, and other resources necessary to implement a lone worker and remote worker safety program.
- Shall ensure that supervisors perform the minimum requirements of this section.

#### **d. Regional Managers, Division Managers, or Denver Office Division Managers**

- Shall direct their field-going employees to comply with local lone worker and remote worker safety plans for field-going work at/on Reclamation facilities or lands within the area office having responsibility.
- Shall develop and implement a lone worker and remote worker safety program for all field-going work within their jurisdiction not otherwise covered by an area office plan (e.g., work on other Federal lands, work on tribal lands).
- Shall provide all needed equipment, systems, check-in protocols, and other resources necessary to implement lone worker and remote worker safety program requirements.
- Shall ensure supervisors within their jurisdiction perform the minimum requirements of this section.

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### e. Supervisors

- Shall account for their lone and remote workers in the field or at remote sites.
- Shall maintain a daily check-in process for lone and remote workers.
- Shall identify the required and available emergency services during the risk assessment and/or job hazard analysis (JHA) process.
- Shall make a determination during the risk assessment and/or JHA process if the field-going employee(s) will be within a limited emergency services response area.
- Shall develop a contact plan and emergency services response plan in collaboration with field-going employee(s).
- Shall notify their appropriate manager(s) immediately of any field-going employee who has missed their check-in time and the supervisor is unable to contact the employee.
- Shall ensure their employees comply with the applicable lone worker and remote worker safety program.

### f. Local Safety Professional/Collateral Duty Safety Representative

- Shall assist supervisors and field-going employees in conducting risk assessments, hazard analysis, and planning for lone and remote work.

### g. Employees

- Shall follow the requirements of this section and the applicable lone worker and remote worker safety program.
- Shall plan their work in collaboration with their supervisor or acting supervisor to assess the risks and hazards of the work they will perform. Shall consult their local safety professional/collateral duty safety representative if additional expertise is needed.
- Shall check-in with their supervisor as required by these procedures.
- Shall notify their supervisor or acting supervisor of any variation or change to their lone worker or remote worker plan as soon as possible.

## 3. Training Requirements

Supervisors shall provide employees with training on the applicable lone worker and remote worker safety program including the relevant hazards and how to effectively mitigate those hazards. Supervisors shall provide employees who work in remote locations with training in first aid, at a level appropriate to the risk, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Supervisors shall ensure employee's certifications are current per Reclamation Safety and Health Standard (RSHS) 1.05, Medical Services and First Aid, paragraph 4, Training Requirements. Supervisors shall train employees to use emergency communication and location devices as identified in the applicable lone worker or remote worker program.

## 4. Hazard Identification, Assessment, and Safety Measures

In addition to the JHA, supervisors shall conduct a written risk assessment and identify potential hazards for all lone and remote work (Reference RSHS Section 1.04, Work Safety Planning). The supervisor shall document hazard mitigation or elimination measures. The supervisor shall evaluate security risks or concerns during this process.

## 5. Pre-job Briefing and Planning Requirements

Before departing, the employee(s) will review the lone or remote worker plan and communicate any changes to their supervisor. The employee will ensure they have all safety equipment necessary. The employee and supervisor must establish a contact plan and an emergency services response plan prior to starting the work.

## 6. Hazardous Environmental Conditions (Weather/Other)

The JHA should include information about potentially hazardous weather or environmental conditions. If hazardous conditions are expected to pose additional risks, supervisors and employees should consider delaying the work or implementing adequate mitigation measures.

## 7. Safe Practices

### a. Emergency Equipment

Employees shall ensure they have adequate two-way communication equipment in the field as indicated in the applicable lone worker and remote worker safety program. If warranted and when available, employees shall check out a satellite phone to provide another means of contact. Employees shall take emergency locators, transmitter devices, or satellite emergency notification devices to the field as identified by the JHA or risk assessment, particularly when other forms of communication, such as radios or cell phones, have limited or non-existent coverage. Supervisors shall provide other safety emergency equipment to employees as identified by the JHA or risk assessment. Employees must test selected communication equipment before the start of operations to verify that the equipment will operate efficiently in the environment, as referenced in RSHS Section 1.04.8.b, Communications.

### b. Contact Plan

The contact plan will state the date, time, and method of check-in communications between the employee(s) and their supervisor. The plan will include procedures regarding employee(s) missed check in(s) and the steps for an alternative means of contact. The plan will also state the steps to alert first responders and/or emergency services to search for the employee(s) when communication cannot be made with the employee(s). The plan will state at what point the supervisor will notify the appropriate manager(s), and who will contact emergency services or first responders.

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- **Minimum Requirements.** The contact plan shall include the following information, at a minimum:
  - name and all contact information of employee(s) conducting lone or remote work,
  - name and phone number(s) of supervisor or acting,
  - daily check-in dates, times, and time zones for employee(s) to contact the supervisor or acting, and
  - time to wait before activating the emergency services response plan and notifying their appropriate manager(s).
  
- **Additional Information.** When available, the contact plan should include the following:
  - contact information for persons or entities close to the remote location, as a secondary method for contacting lone or remote workers, and
  - make, model, color, and license plate of the vehicle(s) used by the employee(s).

### **c. Emergency Services Response Plan**

Supervisors shall put an emergency services response plan in place prior to lone or remote work. Supervisors shall use the emergency services response plan if a lone or remote worker has missed a check-in and the supervisor cannot establish contact. At a minimum, the plan shall include:

- the scheduled location of the lone or remote worker,
- contact information of the emergency services or first responders for the area(s) the employee is located,
- any critical information about the employee(s) that first responders would need to know,
- any critical information first responders need to know to access the area and to locate the employee, and
- the make, model, color, and license plate of the vehicle(s) being used by the employee(s), if available.

### **d. Prohibited Activities for Lone Workers**

Lone workers are prohibited from activities too hazardous to perform alone. The risk and hazard analysis process shall identify any prohibited activities. The supervisor shall communicate the prohibited activities to the employee before work begins.

## **8. Aerosol Defensive Sprays (ADS)**

### **a. Manager Approval**

Local managers may authorize employees to carry and use ADS in the following situations (Note: The use of pepper guns and pepper ball launchers is prohibited):

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- circumstances or functions related to official duties warrant added personal protective measures against potential violent attacks from humans or animals
- employees operating within the scope of their employment on Reclamation lands or other lands and properties under the control of the Bureau of Reclamation,
- designated employees have successfully complete ADS training, and
- approval for employees to carry and use ADS has been identified in a risk assessment and/or JHA signed by the local manager.

### **b. Expiration of ADS Approval**

Employee approval to carry ADS will expire under the following conditions:

- at the end of each calendar year,
- upon completion of a specific project or activity where ADS was authorized for limited use,
- upon change of duty station, status, or transfer,
- upon failure to demonstrate competent and prudent use of ADS, and/or
- whenever such authorization has been revoked by the local manager.

### **c. Training**

Only those employees who have successfully completed an ADS safety course and demonstrated ability in its use are authorized to carry and use ADS. Local managers shall ensure the unit develops an ADS safety course with a field practicum for employees designated to carry and use aerosol defensive sprays. The course shall include the following, at a minimum:

- active ingredient(s) in ADS, such as oleoresin capsicum,
- effects of ADS on wild and domestic animals and humans,
- types of ADS and capabilities,
- how to defend oneself using ADS,
- storage and transportation requirements, including shelf life,
- procedures for readying, carrying, and using ADS,
- medical considerations and treatment for ADS exposure,
- decontamination procedures where ADS has been utilized,
- animal behavior and habitat,
- reporting procedures,
- instructor demonstration in the use of ADS and
- proper disposal of ADS per manufacturer's instructions.

### **d. Instructor Qualifications**

Persons designated to provide ADS safety course instruction shall successfully complete a course sponsored by an ADS manufacturer or a recognized instructor in the use of ADS or an equivalent training course or a local manager shall appoint the instructor based on

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demonstrated knowledge and experience before convening training. Instructors shall also possess knowledge in animal behavior and habitat.

### **e. Course Completion Certification**

Instructors shall provide designated employees, who have successfully completed an ADS safety course, documented evidence of completion, such as a certificate or equivalent. The immediate supervisor shall maintain training records in the Department of the Interior's approved repository and managed in accordance with the Information Management Handbook as referenced in the Reclamation Manual Directive and Standard, Information Management (RCD 05-01).

### **f. Refresher Training**

A refresher training course is required every 2 years and shall include the minimum requirements prescribed in paragraph 1.17.8.c. of this section.

### **g. Transportation and Storage**

The following applies to ADS:

- ensure ADS has not expired,
- shall not be carried or transported aboard commercial aircraft at any time,
- may be transported aboard Reclamation leased or contracted aircraft provided the ADS is securely stored in an approved safety container,
- may be transported in Reclamation-owned, leased, or contracted motor vehicles provided the ADS is securely stored in an approved safety container,
- shall be stored in a manner that limits access to authorized personnel only,
- shall be stored at room temperature,
- Shall not be stored near heat sources or open flames, nor placed in areas that subject ADS to extreme temperatures, such as glove boxes, vehicle trunks, or on a dashboard,
- shall not be carried or transported while off duty,
- shall not be stored in an employee's residence, and
- shall be stored in an approved safety container in the employee's office, shop, facility, or temporary lodging facility.

### **h. Reporting Procedures**

Below are the reporting procedures involving the use of ADS.

- Any employee who discharges ADS in the commission of official duties shall notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible. The immediate supervisor may request the employee to provide a brief narrative of the incident as a follow-up to the initial notification.
- The employee's immediate supervisor shall report the incident to the appropriate local manager as soon as possible.

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- The local manager shall determine if additional actions are needed to be taken to ensure a safe work environment for their employees.

## ▲ RSHS Appendix A: Definitions

RSHS Appendix A ([Definitions](#)) is available to print at:

<https://www.usbr.gov/safety/rshs/index.html>.

## ▲ RSHS Appendix B: Additional References and Citations

RSHS Appendix B ([Additional References and Citations](#)) is available to print at:

<https://www.usbr.gov/safety/rshs/index.html>.