




OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE POLICY

Human Resources Division

Title:	Field and Production Work Safety Guidelines & Emergency Planning	HR_480_04
Supersedes:	HR_480_04, dated September 1, 2004	
Applicability:	Employees performing field or production work in remote or hazardous areas, or performing hazardous activities.	
Reference:	OAR 437-001-0760, OAR 437-002-0161	
Effective Date:	November 1, 2011	Approved: 

I. PURPOSE

To ensure that employees who are working alone or performing field or production work outside of regular office environments have reasonable access to assistance in the event of emergency or hazardous conditions.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Field and Production Work:** Work performed away from an office type setting that includes, but is not limited to, wildlife surveys, fish culturing, animal capture, lake treatments and in-stream work.
- B. **Hazardous Activity or Area:** An activity or area that has inherent dangers due to the type of equipment being used, wildlife encountered, or the environment being worked in. Note: driving a passenger vehicle is not considered a hazardous activity for purposes of this policy.
- C. **Major Road:** A road that is typically used for traveling between two or more developed areas. These may include: interstates, state and federal highways, town roads, and Forest Service primary or arterial routes. Forest Service primary routes generally have a two-digit number, are generally well maintained pavement or gravel, and generally connect two state or federal highways. Forest Service roads whose main purpose is to access remote areas are not major roads.
- D. **Remote Area:** An area that is not on a major road, is not in a populated area, and is not traveled frequently by the public or patrolled regularly by Oregon State Police or other law enforcement agencies.
- E. **Working Alone:** Working by oneself in an area so isolated that there is no visual or audible (voice) contact with another person.

III. POLICY

- A. Employers are not required to directly supervise their employees at all times. Employees also are not prohibited from working alone. However, employers have a basic, fundamental

responsibility to properly supervise employees and provide controls to protect employees from hazardous conditions.

1. Supervisors and Site Safety Managers shall identify areas and activities where, in their best professional judgment, working alone is prohibited.
 2. Supervisors and Site Safety Managers shall identify procedures to minimize risks when employees perform field or production work, whether or not the employee is working alone.
 3. A Job Hazard Analysis for specific remote and dangerous locations will be conducted by the supervisor and employees working alone to identify the hazards present in the environment, processes, or other phases of the work. Those hazards and mitigation of identified hazards will be put into writing and will be communicated to the employee, or any other employees doing that specific task.
- B. Employees working in hazardous areas, performing hazardous activities, or working alone away from the regular office environment shall comply with the safety procedures applicable to their situation. Failure to adhere to the provisions of this policy or the worksite procedures described in the Job Hazard Analysis could result in disciplinary action.
- C. General Provisions
1. OR-OSHA regulations address activities where working alone is prohibited. These activities, which may be applicable to ODFW, include:
 - a. Logging;
 - b. Diving;
 - c. Hazardous waste cleanup; and
 - d. Confined space entry (under certain circumstances).
 2. Each site supervisor, with help from employees stationed at the site, shall develop a list of areas and/or activities, as necessary, where employees are prohibited from working alone, and identify areas and/or activities where check-in/check-out procedures are required. These shall include high hazard areas and activities and/or remote areas. Check-in/check-out procedures will be in writing and supervisors will hold employees accountable for check-in/check-out procedures.
 3. All sites that are remote or have been deemed hazardous shall have written emergency plans outlining communications, first aid, and other emergency actions designed to conserve life and limb of ODFW employees. The emergency plan may be developed by the supervising manager, unit safety manager, or the employees themselves or all three groups working together.
 4. All sites and/or work units shall develop a workable, reasonable check-in and check-out procedure for all personnel working alone in hazardous areas or working alone performing hazardous activities. Employee teams working in a hazardous area or performing a hazardous activity also are subject to the check-in procedures.

5. Personnel who are working in one or more remote area also are required to check-in and check-out if they will be working in the remote area for longer than one hour, either individually or in aggregate. This requirement holds whether or not the remote area is considered hazardous, or whether or not the employees are performing hazardous activities in the remote area.
6. Personnel who are briefly entering into remote areas, incidental to traveling along a major road, and then returning to the major road are not required to check-in or check-out.
7. In areas or activities where at least two people are required to be in the immediate area, both people do not have to be ODFW employees. For example, the second person may be an ODFW volunteer, an operator at a hydroelectric dam, or another government agency employee. The second person should be someone who knows the ODFW employee is in the area, and has agreed (at least by way of informal conversation) to summon emergency assistance should the ODFW employee need it.

D. General Field and Production Work Procedures

1. Each site shall develop site-specific procedures to ensure that employees who perform field or production work in hazardous areas, or perform hazardous activities, are within visual, audible (voice), radio, or telephone contact of another person who can render assistance in the event of an emergency. In addition, when employees are working in remote areas not considered hazardous and are not performing hazardous activities, sites shall develop procedures to ensure that the employee leaves the remote area at the designated time.
2. The following guidelines may be used in developing procedures:
 - a. Attempt to schedule work so that working alone can be avoided.
 - b. Always leave clear instructions of where employees will be working each day, including when they will return to their station or home.
 - c. For backcountry surveys, leave a map at the employee's workstation that includes the legal description of where the employee will be working, the planned route to the start point of the survey, and all possible secondary routes.
 - d. Employees should carry a cell phone and/or portable radio. In areas where radio or cell service may be limited, a satellite GPS messenger device (e.g., the SPOT Personal Tracker™) may be deployed for use by employees to communicate their position or need for help. Ideally, the radios should be able to contact emergency providers other than ODFW (e.g., Oregon State Police, Sheriff). If a satellite GPS messenger device is deployed, it should be set up to send messages to a computer in the office that is monitored by office staff or the employee's supervisor.
 - e. Post the phone numbers/radio frequencies of emergency contacts in each vehicle.

- f. Always test radio, cell phone, and satellite GPS messenger device batteries prior to heading into the field. Also, have a means of communication that will function if the vehicle becomes disabled.
- g. Develop a check-in procedure to ensure all employees are accounted for prior to station closure for the day, or other agreed upon time.
- h. Ideally, check-in should be with the employee's immediate supervisor. However, other reasonable and workable contacts may be used. For example, spouses, other family members, or other responsible persons can be used. In the case of family members or spouses, they should have information available to contact ODFW supervisors or other emergency contacts.
- i. If non-ODFW persons are used as check-in contacts, they must be given clear instructions on what actions to take should the employee not check-in at the designated time. Instructions could include a list of the key ODFW contacts for the particular site.
- j. Each "monitoring site" (office) must establish a procedure to account for employees who do not check-in at the designated time.

E. Responsibilities

- 1. Employees shall:
 - a. Inform the supervisor or other employees where the employee will be specifically working;
 - b. Always check in at the designated time.
- 2. Supervisors shall:
 - a. Determine the areas/activities where employees are not allowed to work alone;
 - b. Develop field and production work safety Job Hazard Analysis for specific remote and dangerous locations;
 - c. To the extent feasible, provide employees with adequate communication equipment. Use SPOT's units to track the location of employees in remote areas. Consider the use of satellite phones in very remote locations where voice communication/check-in is wanted or warranted
 - d. Develop workable check-in procedures and communicate those procedures to employees clearly and in writing; and
 - e. Begin procedures to account for employees who do not check-in at the designated time.