

COUNTY OF ST. PAUL NO. 19

Our Mission - To create desirable rural experiences



OHS-9 Working Alone Policy

Department: Occupational Health and Safety

POLICY OBJECTIVE:

The County of St. Paul No. 19 recognizes that our employees are our most valuable resource and wishes to establish guidelines for staff so that the occupational health and safety conditions for workers working alone are met in accordance with provincial legislation and to protect workers from serious injury or loss of life in the event they are working alone and/or in isolated or remote conditions.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

1.0 Working Alone

- 1.1 As part of their job duties, staff including field service technicians, road construction crew members, agricultural fieldmen, assessors, and other staff as determined by the Chief Administrative Officer or their designee must work and/or travel alone in potentially hazardous and unsafe conditions, sometimes in winter conditions and sometimes in remote areas. In these cases, it is imperative that staff can maintain regular contact with the Alberta 911 Emergency Monitoring Center (hereafter referred to as AEMC 911) to notify that they are okay.
- 1.2 It is important that if something happens to the staff member, they can easily get help from AEMC 911, with the monitor knowing where to dispatch assistance. Or, if the staff member is incapacitated, it is important that the monitor be alerted and again, that they know who to call and where to dispatch the appropriate emergency staff or assistance personnel (e.g., local fire, ambulance, etc.)

2.0 Definitions

Assets: Within the County's WorkAlone monitoring system, assets refer to staff, vehicles, and any other tracking devices that staff may be using for Workalone monitoring, including a smartphone, inReach, SPOT, or vehicle terminal.

Check-In: Staff need to do this using their device, first to notify the AEMC 911 that they want monitoring, and then regularly afterward to stay in contact with AEMC 911. In most cases, these subsequent check-ins after the initial one are done automatically, but staff can also update their status manually. On the SPOT, this means turning the device, turning on the tracking, and then pressing OK. Once set

up on the SafetyLink App, staff must select the sign on and select the check-in button. This operation will also show staff how much time is left before they are required to Check-In Again unless constantly moving more than 200 meters.

Enable: In the *WorkAlone Client Manager*, if the staff's record isn't set to Enabled, they cannot check in with the AEMC 911.

Hazards: Identified conditions that pose a risk to the worker's safety.

Emergency: A condition requiring immediate assistance from police, fire, hazardous material handlers, or any other organization identified by the employer, who must also be alerted in this condition.

Non-emergency/Help Conditions: The staff member's personal safety is not at risk.

Off Monitoring/Checking Out: Staff MUST perform this task when they no longer require monitoring, to avoid their check-in status going overdue and being called by a monitor (this includes going on a lunch break in safe conditions, finished shift, completed travel, etc.). This is a manual process. On the SPOT, staff must press the CUSTOM button and confirm that the message went through before turning off tracking and then turning off the SPOT. When using the SafetyLink App staff must select Sign Off twice. The Sign Off at the upper right hand corner then at the bottom of the App.

Monitoring: Within the WorkAlone system, the staff member's location is known, based on GPS functionality of their assigned device that is reporting to the AEMC 911, as is their current condition (i.e., Normal, Assistance Needed, or SOS).

Safety: The prevention of physical injury to staff and the prevention of physical injury to other persons arising out of or in connection with activities in the workplace.

Unsafe Conditions: Any instance where the field staff member is working alone or remotely, in isolation, or in hazardous conditions and may not have contact with anyone in case of accident, medical emergency, or attack. Unsafe conditions also apply to any staff member who is working alone at the office, during or after office hours.

Working Alone: The performance of any work function by a staff member who is the only worker in the field/workplace at any point in time and who at any point in time, is not directly supervised by the employer/supervisor or another person designated by the employer/supervisor. This condition may also be in conjunction with working in isolation or working remotely.

3.0 General Matters

- 3.1 The County shall provide the tools necessary to avoid, reduce, and remove risks or potential risks to staff as they perform their job duties while working alone and/or in unsafe conditions and/or in potentially hazardous situations.
- 3.2 The County shall provide field devices to field staff for Work Alone monitoring such as a spot or a SafetyLink app for their smartphones.
- 3.3 The County shall provide or compensate employees for their smartphone use for employees working alone; and if necessary, a spare phone in the event of a failed device.
- 3.4 The County management shall be the secondary points of contact for staff members as appropriate.
- 3.5 If field employees encounter hazardous road conditions during their shift where they feel their safety is compromised, they may postpone or cancel carrying out their duties, until a more appropriate time. In this case, staff members must alert the County and the AEMC 911 of their decision to stop or turn back.
- 3.6 Field employees are always the first point of contact for the AEMC 911. Therefore, field staff must have a phone and bring it with them to carry out their duties, so that they can be contacted by AEMC 911. Employees must ensure that their phone is in working order.

4.0 Responsibilities

Employer Responsibilities:

- 4.1 The County of St. Paul No. 19 shall:
 - (a) Conduct a hazard assessment and provide results to staff so that the County of St. Paul management and staff members can properly evaluate the risks of working alone;
 - (b) Direct the development, testing, and implementation of WorkAlone monitoring tools for field staff, supervisors, and the AEMC 911 for use at the office or out in the field;
 - (c) Develop and implement safe work procedures to eliminate or reduce identified risks, based on hazard assessments;
 - (d) Develop and implement safe work procedures to eliminate or reduce identified risks, based on hazard assessments;

- (e) Provide an effective communication system that will allow the WorkAlone devices to report accurately to AEMC 911;
- (f) Provide WorkAlone field devices to County employees for work in WorkAlone conditions;
- (g) Train employees on the company's working alone procedures;
- (h) Establish communication procedures with AEMC 911 and its IT department to ensure that network connections have been established correctly, and that accurate staff contact details are provided to the monitors;
- (i) Ensure that employees comply with the County of St. Paul's Working Alone Policy and procedures;
- (j) Review procedures annually to ensure that the existing policies and procedures are still applicable; and
- (k) Ensure the implementation of feedback and fixes in the WorkAlone system, based on employee and AEMC feedback and reports.

Supervisor Responsibilities

4.2 The County of St. Paul management team shall:

- (a) Ensure that staff are trained on the following policies and tools:
 - (i) The County of St. Paul No. 19's Working Alone Policy and procedures;
 - (ii) The use of CAMS Admin for accurate entry in staff and records;
 - (iii) The use of the SPOT; and
 - (iv) The use of the SafetyLink application for smartphones, if applicable.
- (b) Receive training on the use of GPSCAMS or WorkAlone Client Manager to be able to enter and edit the WorkAlone template(s) for employees, including knowing which template should be applied and when, and if settings should change, depending on the type of working alone conditions the employees will be encountering;
- (c) Establish the appropriate check-out/off monitoring conditions for employees;
- (d) Establish the appropriate contacts and procedures for staff and monitors in case of an emergency and non-emergency;

- (e) Keep staff member's contact information up-to-date in WorkAlone Client Manager and CAMS Admin so that monitors have the correct information;
- (f) Provide an alternate check-in/assist/emergency contact method for staff to use if they cannot use the tools provided; and
- (g) Implement employee feedback procedures for all WorkAlone tools and procedures.

Employee Responsibilities

4.3 Employees of the County of St. Paul No. 19 shall:

- (a) Attend or receive training in WorkAlone procedures;
- (b) Carry a WorkAlone field device on work alone excursions;
- (c) Ensure the WorkAlone field device is in good working order;
- (d) Carry spare batteries and power systems for the WorkAlone field device;
- (e) Ensure the SPOT or SafetyLink App is functioning properly before leaving to carry out their duties;
- (f) Carry a cellular phone for contact by the AEMC 911, as the employee will always be the first point of contact for monitors;
- (g) Notify management as soon as possible in the event that the phone is lost, broken, or becomes unserviceable;
- (h) Follow all WorkAlone procedures when performing job duties while working alone, including using the SPOT or SafetyLink App, carrying a phone, and following County safety procedures;
- (i) Check-out/go off monitoring on the Spot and Sign off on the SafetyLink App from the AEMC 911 when they don't need monitoring (e.g., on a lunch break in safe conditions, no longer in a hazardous or potentially hazardous situation, or shift finished, or returned from a trip into the field);
- (j) Exercise personal caution when travelling alone and take precautions when looking after their own safety, especially when working alone;
- (k) Keep their contact information including phone numbers and WorkAlone tools up-to-date with the County;

- (l) Report any issues with the WorkAlone procedures, tools, and environment so that outstanding issues can be managed as soon as possible; and
- (m) If working alone at the County Office or Public Works Shop, ensure that doors are locked, and if available set the alarm when leaving the building, if you are the last to leave.

AEMC 911 Responsibilities

4.4 SOS calls are dispatched through 911 so that monitors can determine if fire, police, or ambulance should be sent. If monitors cannot determine what type of emergency has occurred, local fire will be dispatched since they have first responder training.

4.5 AEMC 911 shall:

- (a) Provide the necessary environment and tools to properly monitor workers, including computer equipment, phone lines, internet access, software, and login credentials;
- (b) Provide training for use of the WorkAlone tools and operations;
- (c) Dispatch local fire to the last reported location when the County field employees require emergency assistance, if a County employee cannot be reached in this condition;
- (d) Comply with the procedures indicated by the County when using WorkAlone system;
- (e) Ensure that the communications/network infrastructure is operating properly, including server communications, alerts, and reporting history, and
- (f) Report feedback and issues to the County management.

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Amended: May 6, 2014
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