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SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES

Employees Working Alone

SOP 10-28

Definition:

Working alone: A person is “alone” at work when they are on their own; when they cannot be seen or heard by another person.

It is important to consider all NCDOT work conditions. There are various jobs within NCDOT that are performed by employees working alone. Working alone describes situations during employment when an employee is:

- The only employee at the workplace, project site or on the highway.
- Not being directly supervised by their manager or supervisor.
- In a location where that can't be seen or heard by others (including the general public/contractors) or where they do not have direct contact with a co-worker.
- Working at a location where assistance is not readily available should an emergency occur.

1. Managers, supervisors, and employees should conduct a review of the tasks performed by lone workers and identify the hazards associated with the tasks to ensure proper safety controls are in place to decrease the likelihood of an incident. It is important to assess each situation individually. Procedures should be documented for both regular business hours as well as after hours or weather situations. The review and identification of hazards should include but not limited to the following:
 - a) Location where work is to be performed.
 - b) Type of work being performed.
 - c) Duration of work being performed.
 - d) Hazards associated with the work performed (stuck-by, elevated surfaces, electrical, or chemicals etc.)
 - e) Are safety controls and/or personal protective equipment available and provided.
 - f) Protocols in the event of an emergency, incident/injury or when check-in procedures extend established timeframes.
2. Employees shall communicate with management if additional hazards are identified while working alone that were not previously identified and if new safety controls are needed.
3. Safety Representatives, Management and Other employees should be utilized to assist in reviewing tasks and hazards that may be present and develop safety controls and personal protective equipment while working alone.
4. Report all situations, incidents or near misses where being alone increases the severity of the situation.
5. Establish a standard check-in time with your manager/supervisor throughout the day to ensure someone is aware of your location. Check-in times should be established (at a minimum) at the beginning of the work shift, mid-day, and the end of the work shift. Identify the mode of communication to perform the check-in (visually or verbally). A written log of contact may be necessary.
6. Schedule higher risk tasks to be done during when another employee can be available. Discuss this option with your manager/supervisor to coordinate schedules.
7. All employees shall be provided with training and education based on the hazards associated with their job tasks and duties. If those tasks involve working alone, additional training may be necessary to increase their knowledge of NCDOT procedures necessary to avoid an accident or injury.