

# COUNTY OF ST. PAUL #19

Policy Number

SAF-43

Title  
Working Alone Policy

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**Purpose:** 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.

**Background:** 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 designate 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.

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.).

## **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.

**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.

**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.

**WorkAlone Terminal:** A push button unit installed in the vehicle for WorkAlone monitoring of a staff member.

**Policy:**

1. The County of St. Paul No. 19 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.
  - The County of St. Paul No. 19 shall provide field devices to field staff for WorkAlone monitoring
  - The County of St. Paul No. 19 shall provide or compensate smartphones

for those employees working alone; and if necessary a spare in the event of a failed device

- The County of St. Paul No. 19 management shall be the secondary points of contact for staff members as appropriate
2. 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 of St. Paul No. 19 and the AEMC 911 of their decision to stop and/or turn back.
  3. 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.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### *Employer Responsibilities:*

The County of St. Paul No. 19 will:

- 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, and
- 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, and
- Develop and implement safe work procedures to eliminate or reduce identified risks, based on hazard assessments, and
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- Provide an effective communication system that will allow the WorkAlone devices to report accurately to AEMC 911, and
- Provide WorkAlone field devices to County employees for work in WorkAlone conditions, and
- Train employees on the company's working alone procedures, and
- 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, and
- Ensure that employees comply with the County of St. Paul's Working Alone Policy and procedures, and
- Review procedures annually to ensure that the existing policies and procedures are still applicable, and
- Ensure the implementation of feedback and fixes in the WorkAlone system, based on employee and AEMC feedback and reports.

### *Supervisor Responsibilities:*

The County of St. Paul management team will:

- Ensure that staff are trained on the following policies and tools:
  - The County of St. Paul No. 19's Working Alone Policy and procedures
  - The use of **CAMS Admin** for accurate entry in staff and device records
  - The use of the **SPOT**
  - The use of the **GEMINI WorkAlone** application for smartphones, if applicable
- Receive training on the use of **GPSCAMS** or **WorkAlone Client Manager** to be able 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, and
- Establish the appropriate check-out/off monitoring conditions for employees, and
- Establish the appropriate contacts and procedures for staff and monitors in case of an emergency and non-emergency, and
- Keep staff member's contact information up-to-date in WorkAlone Client Manager and CAMS Admin so that monitors have the correct information, and
- Provide an alternate check-in/assist/emergency contact method for staff to use if they cannot use the tools provided, and
- Implement employee feedback procedures for all WorkAlone tools and procedures.

### *Employee Responsibilities:*

Employees of the County of St. Paul No. 19 will:

- Attend or receive training in WorkAlone procedures, and
- Carry a WorkAlone field device on work alone excursions, and
- Ensure the WorkAlone field device is in good working order, and
- Carry spare batteries and power systems for the WorkAlone field device, and
- Ensure the SPOT is functioning properly before leaving to carry out their duties, and
- Carry a cellular phone for contact by the AEMC 911, as the employee will always be the first point of contact for monitors, and
- Notify management as soon as possible in the event that the phone is lost, broken, or becomes unserviceable, and
- When working alone, follow all WorkAlone procedures when performing job duties while working alone, including using the SPOT, carrying a phone, and following County safety procedures, and
- Check-out/go off monitoring 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, and

- Exercise personal caution when travelling alone and take precautions when looking after their own safety, and especially when working alone, and
- Keep their contact information including phone numbers and WorkAlone tools up-to-date with the County, and
- Report any issues with the WorkAlone procedures, tools, and environment so that outstanding issues can be managed as soon as possible, and
- If working alone at the County Office or Public Works Shop, ensure that doors are locked, use the keypad to set the alarm on doors only and set the alarm when leaving the building, if last to leave.

#### *AEMC 911 Responsibilities*

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.

AEMC 911 will:

- Provide the necessary environment and tools to properly monitor workers, including computer equipment, phone lines, internet access, software, and login credentials, and
- Provide training for use of the WorkAlone tools and operations, and
- 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, and
- Comply with the procedures indicated by the County when using WorkAlone system, and
- Ensure that the communications/network infrastructure is operating properly, including server communications, alerts, and reporting history, and
- Report feedback and issues to the County management.

## Appendix A WorkAlone Procedures

For WorkAlone monitoring to operate correctly, employees must follow the procedures outlined in this section.

County field employees must follow the procedures listed below when working alone, including pre-trip, trip, and post-trip procedures.

### *Pre-Trip*

- a) Determine roadside assistance contacts, in case roadside assistance becomes needed.
- b) Notify supervisors of the location and nature of your field trip.
- c) Ensure travel kits are sufficiently equipped and stocked before leaving on a WorkAlone field trip.
  - Check battery levels
  - Ensure spare batteries are available
  - Prepare travel kit supplies (flashlight, roadside assistance tools, blanket in cases of winter travel, first aid kit, etc.)
- d) If you do not have a smartphone, request a County-provided smartphone and check with management to ensure that its number is on the WorkAlone template contact list so that monitors call the right number when attempting to reach you.
- e) Print out and bring WorkAlone field device documentation and any other applicable WorkAlone documentation for your reference.

### *Trip Start*

- a) Before leaving, check road conditions for trip route.
- b) Check in with AEMC 911, using the SPOT
  - Using the WorkAlone field device **Sign On** to the WorkAlone monitoring system providing a **Sign Off** time where applicable
  - Depending on the WorkAlone ensure that it is in **Tracking** mode
  - Perform a **Check In** to ensure proper operation

*NOTE: Follow the manufacturer's usage guidelines for the WorkAlone field device. For example, if not used for more than two weeks, it may take a few minutes for the initial GPS position to be established when you first turn on the device. For that reason, you may want to turn on the device and check-in a few minutes before leaving on your trip (15 minutes). Subsequent check-ins will occur automatically as the device moves with the vehicle. You do not need to check in manually again unless you want to restart the timer. Also, always ensure the WorkAlone field device has a clear view of the sky and keep it at least twelve inches from other GPS devices.*

### *Trip Breaks or Trip End*

- a) Press the **Sign Off** to stop monitoring if you are taking a break and/or if you are in a safe environment where you no longer need monitoring, and/or if your trip has ended. If you do not go off-monitoring, and you have stopped moving, your next check-in will become overdue and you will be called by an AEMC 911 monitor.
- b) When using a SPOT device and the **Custom** button light stops blinking, turn off **Tracking** and then turn off the SPOT to conserve batter power. **DO NOT** turn off the SPOT if the **Custom** light is still blinking.

*Note: Depending on your location, it may take up to fifteen minutes for the **Custom** light to stop blinking. Make sure that the SPOT remains in a location where the top of Device has a clear view of the sky. For example, if you are nearing the end of your trip, you may want to turn off monitoring. By the time you reach your destination, the SPOT's off monitoring message will likely be sent to the AEMC and then you can turn off the unit.*

- c) If you still need monitoring but cannot check in automatically, call the monitor and request a manual check-in. For example, you can arrange for the monitor to call you after a set period of time, at each interval.

### *If SOS is required during a trip*

- a) Press the SOS button on the WorkAlone field device. A monitor will call you to determine your problem.
  - If you cannot be reached, monitors will dispatch local fire to the last reported location from the WorkAlone field device
  - If you can be reached, monitors will dispatch the appropriate agency
  - If you are incapacitated (for example, an accident occurred, and/or you are experiencing a medical emergency) and cannot press the SOS button, your check-in will become overdue and monitors will follow procedure to dispatch first responders to your last reported GPS position

**This is why it is critical that you turn on Tracking on the SPOT and NOT just press On and then OK.**

- b) The monitor will resolve the condition once your safety is assured.
- c) After the condition is resolved, your normal check-in status resumes until you go off-monitoring or until it is turned off by County management.

*Working Alone at the Office*

- a) Lock the front door with your key
- b) Check that all other doors are locked
- c) Enter keypad alarm code
- d) Lock the door with your key
- e) Do not share alarm codes with anyone

	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Amended</b>	<b>May 6, 2014</b>
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