

**Ohio Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of labor and Safety  
Standard Safety Operating Procedure Number: SP11-19  
Date: February 22, 2011**

**Status: Final**

**Title: WORKING ALONE**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard the health and safety of Ohio EPA's employees while performing assigned field duties. Employees are not permitted to work alone in situations where their health and safety could be jeopardized or when it is prohibited by any Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) standard.

**Definitions:**

***Working Alone:*** Performing official Ohio EPA duties at a location unaccompanied by another Ohio EPA employee or facility operator.

***Confined Space:*** must meet all three criteria:

- a) large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned duties;
- b) has limited or restricted means for entry and exit; and,
- c) is not designed for continuous employee occupancy.

**Requirements:**

1. Employees **will not** work alone, under any circumstances, in the following situations:
  - a. When wearing any type of air-supplied respiratory protective device, including but not limited to, self-contained breathing apparatus and airline respiratory systems. (29 CFR 1910.134)
  - b. When entering any type of "confined space". For a definition of a confined space refer to 29 CFR 1910.146 and OEPA Safety Policy No. OEPA-SM-10-002.
  - c. When performing any type of electrofishing activities.
  - d. While operating any type of water craft.
  - e. While performing any activities where the use of fall protection is OSHA mandated (I.E. use of harnesses and scaffolding during air monitoring). (29 CFR 1926. Subpart M).

f. Performing reconnaissance or site characterization at uncontrolled hazardous waste sites (29 CFR 1910.120).

g. While wearing any type of air-purifying respirator unless accompanied by an employee of the facility familiar with the hazards anticipated and the appropriate level of respiratory protection.

h. At any locations listed in a site-specific Health and Safety Plan where working alone is prohibited. (29 CFR 1910.120)

i. Any other locations that have been identified by the Agency Safety Office where potential hazards may be present which could jeopardize the health and safety of employees.

j. Working in any area that is defined as “immediately dangerous to life and/or health” (IDLH) as defined by OSHA. (29 CFR 1910.120)

2. In situations where employees may have reason to believe that an unfriendly or hostile encounter could occur, Ohio EPA employees should make arrangements to travel with another employee. “Reasons to believe” may include:

a. Information in district office or Central Office files

b. Previous experience at the facility by any staff

3. Decisions on how to proceed will be made based on the information available and the Agency’s responsibility to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of our employees.

4. If unaccompanied visits are authorized to these areas, a cellular phone, or other means of communication will be readily available at all times during the visit.

5. Ohio EPA employees are otherwise permitted to work alone unless there are any other prohibiting factors involved that are not health and safety related.