

REPORTING UNSAFE WORKING CONDITIONS

(Reviewed 9/16/2008)

Requirements for Handling Employee Reports of Unsafe or Unhealthful Conditions.

- PIERC will establish and maintain formal and informal processes for employees or their representatives to report unsafe and unhealthful conditions in the workplace and to request an inspection of the condition(s).
- The informal process will be one that encourages personnel to verbally report unsafe and unhealthful conditions to their supervisors. It will also encourage supervisors to act promptly and appropriately on employees' reports so that the more time-consuming formal process is unnecessary.
- The formal process will be in writing and provide personnel or personnel representatives the opportunity to remain anonymous and still be informed of the resolution of their concerns. Employees shall use Form 9-3074 anonymously (see below).
- The formal process will also include provisions on how personnel or personnel representatives may appeal to higher authorities, including the Departmental Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO) and the Secretary of Labor (see 29 CFR 1960.28).
- If employees feel the condition remains unabated, they may request additional review by completing items 1-6 of USGS Form 9-3074 and forward to the Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator.
- If the condition cannot be resolved at the local field level, additional evaluation requests may be made by forwarding USGS Form 9-3074 to higher channels (regional and Bureau), for resolution. Final appeals may be made to the Director, Office of Safety and Health, DOI, and the Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Washington, D.C.
- In the case of imminent danger situations, employees or their representatives will be able to make reports by the most expeditious means available and follow-up with written reports. Imminent danger refers to any condition or practice that could reasonably be expected to cause death or serious physical harm before normal abatement actions can be taken.

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- A log of reports of unsafe or unhealthful conditions will be maintained by the appropriate safety office or establishment and the conditions will be tracked until they are resolved (see 29 CFR 1960.71).
- Imminent danger conditions will be investigated within 24 hours, potentially serious conditions investigated within 3 working days, and other hazardous conditions investigated within 20 working days.
- Employees or representatives submitting a report will be notified in writing by the official in charge of the establishment within 15 calendar days if the official does not plan to make an inspection.
- A copy of the USGS report of an inspection, made as a result of an employee's formal report of an unsafe or unhealthful condition, will be provided to the employee or his/her representative within 15 calendar days after completion of investigating a safety concern and within 30 calendar days for a health concern. If additional time is required, the employee or representative will be notified of the expected due date.
- If the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) receives a report of an unsafe or unhealthful condition, it has the option of allowing the USGS to conduct its own investigation.
- Reports of unsafe or unhealthful conditions by employees are an important means of identifying potential hazards before accidents and/or injuries occur and are encouraged at all organizational levels. Reports should be handled at the operating level to expedite corrective action. However, provisions are made to make these reports or complaints directly to the local organizational management and/or the respective Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator or Environmental Program Coordinator.
- All levels of management shall ensure that employees are informed of all channels for reporting unsafe and unhealthful conditions. Emphasis should be placed on personal responsibility for making such reports. The methods of hazard reporting within the USGS are listed below in order of succession:
 - 1 Line Supervisor
 - 2 Collateral Duty Safety/Environmental Coordinator or Safety Committee
 - 3 Organizational Manager (District/Team/Center) management level

4 Regional Safety Officer

5 Regional Safety Manager

6 Bureau Safety Manager

- Reports shall be made in writing and submitted to the appropriate source for investigation. Anonymous reports shall be investigated in the same manner as signed reports. Employees submitting signed reports that request anonymity will have their identities kept confidential to anyone other than those authorized by the OSHA Act.
- Reports shall be investigated by the responsible management official or personnel under their authority and a written reply forwarded to the originator (if known) within 10 working days of report receipt, validating or invalidating the condition and notifying the originator of their right to appeal. Every effort, including consultation with the Regional Safety Officer/Manager or Bureau Safety Manager, will be made to resolve the concern of the employee to mutual satisfaction.
- Employee appeals shall be made to the next investigating level within 10 days of report receipt.
- Notification involving imminent danger or loss of life shall be made by telephone to the respective Regional Safety Manager and Regional Safety Officer as applicable, with follow-up in writing to minimize delays in investigation and abatement. Imminent danger reports will be investigated immediately, but no later than 24 hours after notification, by the Line Supervisor, Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator, and/or Environmental Program Coordinator, Management Official, and/or the Regional Safety Manager/Officer, as applicable.
- Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator and/or Collateral Duty Environmental Program Coordinator shall retain all reports for a minimum of 5 years.
- Regional Safety Managers and Officers shall review reports during on-site Program assessment/inspections.

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USGS FORM 9-7034 -- REPORT OF UNSAFE OR UNHEALTHFUL CONDITION		FILE NUMBER:
PART I: ORIGINATOR HAZARD DESCRIPTION		
DATE REPORTED: _____ LOCATION: _____ ROOM NUMBER: _____		
HAZARD DESCRIPTION:		
PROPOSED CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: DATE: _____		
NAME(optional): _____ PHONE: _____ ORG: _____		
PART II: SAFETY OFFICIAL EVALUATION:		
RISK EVAL. (MARK ONE): IMMINENT DANGER: _____ SERIOUS: _____ NONSERIOUS: _____		
HAZARD CLASSIFICATION (MARK ONE) ENVIRONMENTAL _____; FIRE: _____ SAFETY: _____		
SAFETY ASSESSMENT:		
SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS: DATE: _____		
NAME(optional): _____ PHONE: _____ ORG: _____		
PART III: SUPERVISOR CORRECTIVE ACTION		
HAZARD PLANNED OR ACTUAL CORRECTIVE ACTION(S)		
ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE: _____ ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE: _____		
NAME: PHONE: ORG: DATE: _____ SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE: _____		
PART IV: SAFETY OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION		
SAFETY OFFICIAL: _____ CLOSURE DATE: _____		
DATE TRANSFERED TO HAZARD ABATEMENT LOG/MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN, AS APPLICABLE: _____		

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Instructions for Filing Employee Reports of Unsafe Conditions (Form 9-3074)

Any USGS employee has the right and is encouraged to report unsafe or unhealthful conditions that exists in any work place or work environment (refer to the Occupational Safety and Health Handbook, Chapter 3, 445-2-H for more information).

USGS employees are encouraged to verbally report unsafe or unhealthful conditions to their supervisors as soon as the condition is identified.

Reports that are submitted in writing shall be filed on **Form 9-3074** describing the hazard and the proposed corrective action suggested. In the case of imminent danger (i.e., the condition immediately threatens serious physical harm), the report should be made by the most expeditious means available to your supervisor or safety representative.

If requested by the employee, the safety and health manager, or the designee, will not disclose the name of any such person, or the names of the individual employees referred to in the report to anyone other than an authorized representative of the Secretary of Labor.

All USGS employees are protected from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal for exercising any of their rights under the DOI and USGS occupational safety, health, and environmental programs.

The Safety Official reserves the right to disclose the corrective action with the originator. Each hazard will be at the discretion of the circumstances that surround the condition or hazard. It is the policy of the USGS not to find fault or blame rather to correct the hazardous condition and prevent future occurrences.

File number: Safety Official should identify

Part 1: Originator Hazard Description

Date Reported: Enter today's date

Location: Enter the building and area where the condition exists

Room number: Enter the room number or nearest identifiable room number

Hazard Description: Enter the act, condition, and/or practice you observed. Give as much detail as possible. Name people to contact for further information who may have observed the hazard, or who committed the unsafe act.

Proposed Corrective Action(s): Enter your recommendations on how to correct the hazard.

Name (optional): Enter your name. If you wish to not enter your name you will not receive a written reply to your report.

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Phone: Enter a telephone number where you can be contacted for further information, to discuss the report or to provide you with status reports on abatement actions.

Organization Code: Enter your Mail Stop and office code in order to receive written replies.

Once you have completed part one of this form, make a copy for yourself and forward to your Safety Official for evaluation. The Safety Official will forward a copy to the area supervisor for action and review.

Once the supervisors have taken actions to correct the hazard, they are to give a copy of the report to the employees reporting the hazard, and forward the original to the Safety Official.