



## **Remote Worksite Safety**

Worksites in secluded areas always bring a threat of the unknown. What they also do is make emergency situations more critical. The location may not have the best cell phone reception. To make matters worse, emergency services may have a difficult time locating you without a physical address. This article will discuss best practices to keep the work crews safe while in remote locations.

### **Pre-planning**

As with any new job, it is always important to review the work to be completed and the location of the worksite prior to the job even beginning. You want to determine how many crew members are necessary for the job. This is not just to complete the job but also for communication in case an emergency occurs. The job may only require two people to complete it but what if one is knocked unconscious? How will the other employee be able to call 911 and also assist the co-worker. If adding an extra crew member is not feasible, consider having someone close by check on them every thirty to forty-five minutes. The safety of the workers is paramount. This holds true with only one employee who is operating heavy equipment. They should always be monitored or be able to quickly communicate any emergencies.

### **Communication**

With remote worksites, your crew needs to be able to communicate with the supervisor or main office. We all obviously have cell phones but there are dead areas that can hamper their use. Most of our members have 2-way radios in their work truck/heavy equipment. This is a great alternative. However, you want to ensure that reception will work for those, as well. Prior to the beginning of work, test the area for reception and clarity to ensure communication can be maintained. Also consider that 2-way radios may not be able to reach emergency services or 911. For this reason, the office needs to know the exact location of the worksite and the type of the emergency if they are the ones responsible for calling 911. It is important to have a plan prior to the first piece of dirt being moved.

### **Providing a location to 911**

If emergency services are called, it is imperative that first responders can locate the worksite. The caller needs to provide at least a few of the following. A direction from the closest major intersection, "The first gravel road northeast of Main and 55". Have an employee drive out to the main road to flag down emergency personnel. This should only be an option if someone else can stay with the injured employee(s). Do not leave injured workers alone. Another option is providing GPS coordinates where the employees are. Also, as an identifier, place a safety cone and flag at the entrance off the main road to signify the road leading to the worksite for supervisors and other authorized personnel

who may visit throughout the day. Place this on the first day, regardless of an emergency. It may come in handy later.

### **Drills**

Conducting a drill is a great way to test the crew's preparedness. The best time to do one would be during the morning meeting, prior to work beginning. Identify an employee to pretend to be injured, who will call 911 (don't actually call 911) or radio the office and who will drive out to the main road to wait for the first responders. The person that calls in the emergency will have to communicate the type of emergency, how many are injured, and the location of the worksite. It sounds trivial but it could save a life.

There are times that worksites end up in very remote locations with limited cell phone reception and most do not have a physical address. These are obstacles that can make a major emergency far worse because time is of the essence. For this reason, it is imperative that you have a plan for any worksite that has the potential to hinder communication or the arrival of emergency personnel. Develop a plan before work ever begins and test it for effectiveness. On top of that, involve everyone that has the potential to play a role in saving a coworker's life, supervisors, crew members, and office staff.

*The TWCARMF Loss Control Staff is available to assist in any way to help develop plans for Remote Worksite Safety. Contact Jeremy Wade ([Jeremy.wade@sedgwick.com](mailto:Jeremy.wade@sedgwick.com)) if you have any questions or would like to schedule a visit.*