

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

### **TEMPORARY RELEASE**

*(Expires 04/30/2020)*

<b>Subject:</b>	Stop Work Authority
<b>Purpose:</b>	Demonstrate that safety is valued in all tasks undertaken by Bureau of Reclamation employees by giving them the authority to stop a task, without fear of reprisal, when they have a reasonable belief there is a safety risk that has not been properly mitigated. The benefit of this Policy is that it provides all employees with a tool to ensure safety in Reclamation's efforts to meet its mission.
<b>Authority:</b>	Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, December 29, 1970 (Pub. L. 91-596; 84 Stat 1590; 29 USC 651 et seq.); 29 CFR 1960, <i>Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters</i> ; Executive Order 12196, <i>Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees</i> ; and Department of the Interior Departmental Manual 485 DM, <i>Safety and Occupational Health Program</i> ; Reclamation Safety and Health Standards
<b>Approving Official:</b>	Commissioner
<b>Contact:</b>	Director, Security, Safety, and Law Enforcement (84-40000)

1. **Introduction.** Accomplishing Reclamation's mission to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources can involve hazards whether in a facility, field, or office environment. To accomplish its mission, Reclamation must engage in a wide range of work-related tasks that involve some risk to its employees and others. The safety of employees, contractors, and the public is a value that Reclamation must carry into every aspect of its operation. For this reason, employees are empowered to stop work when they have a reasonable belief that a hazard is identified and has not been properly mitigated.
2. **Applicability.**
  - A. This Policy applies to all Reclamation employees.
  - B. This Policy is not intended to address those instances when a supervisor of a specific task or project carries out his/her responsibilities, under Reclamation Manual Policy, *Safety and Occupational Health Program* (SAF P01), to communicate and implement Reclamation SOH requirements within their area of responsibility for that task. Although a supervisor can stop the performance of duties until a safety issue is addressed, it is not considered an official "stop work" that meets the reporting requirements of this Policy. Although not a requirement of this Policy, supervisors are

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

### **TEMPORARY RELEASE**

*(Expires 04/30/2020)*

---

encouraged to report safety issues that arise in the performance of their duties to promote an environment on continuous improvement and learning throughout Reclamation.

3. **Definitions.** For the purpose of this Policy, the terms are defined as follows:
- A. **Close Call.** See definition for incident.
  - B. **Directorate.** The organization over which a Reclamation Leadership Team (RLT) member has responsibility.
  - C. **Incident.** For reporting purposes, an unplanned event involving people, equipment, or the environment that could have resulted in an injury, illness, and/or loss, but did not (485 DM 29). Also referred to as a “near miss” or “close call.”
  - D. **Mitigate.** To make less harmful. For stop work incidents, mitigation may include clarifying task procedures, providing additional employee training, or implementing additional safety controls to ensure safe work environments to the extent possible.
  - E. **Near Miss.** See definition for incident.
  - F. **Reasonable Belief.** A determination made by an employee when he/she has sincere safety concerns and believes that he/she has information that evidences a substantial and specific danger to employee health or safety, or government.
  - G. **Reclamation Leadership Team or RLT.** Reclamation’s Senior Executive and Senior Leader positions (see membership listing on the RLT Intranet site).
  - H. **Reprisal.** Any act of restraint, interference, coercion, or discrimination against an employee for exercising his/her rights under Executive Order 12196 and 29 CFR 1960, or for participating in Reclamation’s Safety and Occupational Health Program (485 DM 29).
  - I. **Stop Work Authority.** The ability of any employee to stop work at any time without fear of reprisal if an imminent safety risk is perceived and has not been mitigated.
  - J. **Stop Work Incident.** Immediate suspension of tasks when an unplanned safety risk is perceived.
  - K. **Supervisors.** Reclamation employee that has one or more direct reports (i.e., Commissioner, deputy commissioners, directors, senior level positions, managers, and supervisors).

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

### ***TEMPORARY RELEASE***

***(Expires 04/30/2020)***

---

L. **Task.** Work or set of actions required to complete a specific project.

#### 4. **Responsibilities.**

A. **RLT.** The RLT is responsible for:

- (1) creating a culture in which assessing hazards and working safely is a value and expectation when accomplishing Reclamation's mission;
- (2) ensuring employees are aware of organizational safety values;
- (3) ensuring implementation of the minimum stop work procedures identified in Appendix A of this Policy or establishing local stop work implementing instructions for their organization for stop work incidents;
- (4) encouraging the exercise of stop work authority when employees have a reasonable belief safety concerns are perceived; and
- (5) ensuring no reprisal toward employees who exercise their stop work authority.

B. **Supervisors.** Supervisors are responsible for:

- (1) understanding the potential hazards to which employees may be exposed and ensuring all necessary steps are taken to provide a safe work environment to the extent possible;
- (2) ensuring all employees participating on tasks within the supervisor's area of responsibility are provided the minimum stop work procedures identified in Appendix A of this Policy or the local stop work implementing instructions prior to performance of the task;
- (3) communicating the expectation of employees to responsibly exercise stop work authority when the employee has a reasonable belief that a safety hazard is present or perceived;
- (4) ensuring all employees understand that reprisal for exercising stop work authority will not be tolerated;
- (5) ensuring minimum stop work procedures identified in Appendix A of this Policy or the local stop work implementing instructions are followed;
- (6) ensuring no reprisal against individuals who exercise stop work authority because of a reasonable belief that a safety hazard is present or perceived;

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

### ***TEMPORARY RELEASE***

***(Expires 04/30/2020)***

---

- (7) leading the assessment, mitigation, and reporting of the stop work incident, including involving the employee who exercised stop work authority and appropriate and qualified subject matter experts and safety personnel; and
- (8) reporting the number of stop work actions for their organization to their organizational safety and health office.

**C. Employees.** Employees are responsible for:

- (1) ensuring a safe work environment in their immediate work area for self and others and any other area where they observe safety hazards;
- (2) exercising stop work authority responsibly and actively participating in documenting, mitigating, and reporting on the stop work incident to reduce the hazards to all employees, contractors, and the public;
- (3) becoming familiar with the minimum stop work procedures identified in Appendix A of this Policy or the stop work authority implementing instructions for the location at which they are performing tasks;
- (4) initiating stop work authority when they have a reasonable belief that a perceived safety hazard may result in an unwanted event; and
- (5) supporting stop work authority initiated by others.

**5. Policy.**

- A. The safety of Reclamation employees, contractors, and the public must be a primary concern on every task performed to accomplish Reclamation's mission. Safety must be the highest priority consideration and paramount to work schedules, due dates, timelines, and any other perceived deadline associated with the tasks undertaken by Reclamation employees. Every employee completing tasks at Reclamation dams, powerplants, pumping plants, and all other facilities and properties must be provided the minimum stop work procedures identified in Appendix A of this Policy or the local stop work implementing instructions for that location. Some examples include: referencing Appendix A or the local stop work implementing instructions in the job hazard analysis; posting Appendix A or the local implementing instructions in common areas; and discussing Appendix A or the local implementing instructions in safety meetings.
- B. Every employee is empowered to stop work without fear of reprisal when they have reasonable belief a safety hazard has not been adequately mitigated. It is not necessary

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

### **TEMPORARY RELEASE**

*(Expires 04/30/2020)*

---

for the individual exercising stop work authority to be involved with the task perceived as unsafe; however, once stop work authority is exercised, all work on the task perceived to be unsafe will cease immediately. If ceasing work immediately would result in additional hazards, workers must bring the task to a safe stopping point.

6. **Stop Work Procedures.** Each directorate must determine whether they will follow the minimum stop work procedures in Appendix A or establish local stop work implementing instructions for their directorate.
  - A. **Appendix A.** Appendix A provides the minimum procedures that must be addressed for a stop work incident. If a directorate has not created written local stop work implementing instructions, their organization must follow the procedures in Appendix A.
  - B. **Local Stop Work Implementing Instructions.** Directorates<sup>1</sup> choosing to develop and use local stop work implementing instructions must, at a minimum, address the topics identified in Appendix A. In addition, the local stop work implementing instructions must be in writing and made available to each employee in the organization.
7. **No Reprisal.** At no time will any employee suffer reprisal for responsibly exercising stop work authority when they have a reasonable belief that a safety hazard is perceived that has not been properly mitigated to the extent possible.
8. **Contractors.** Contracting officer's representatives must ensure that contracts include language regarding compliance with Reclamation's safety policies and procedures, including stop work authority for both employees and contractors.

---

<sup>1</sup>Where multiple directorates exist in the same location (i.e., Denver, CO, and Washington, DC), multiple directorates may decide to issue comprehensive local implementing instructions that are applicable to all in that location.

## RECLAMATION MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Release No. \_\_\_\_\_

Ensure all employees needing this information are provided a copy of this release.

### Reclamation Manual Release Number and Subject

### Summary of Changes

NOTE: This Reclamation Manual release applies to all Reclamation employees. When an exclusive bargaining unit exists, changes to this release may be subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements.

### Filing instructions

Remove Sheets

Insert Sheets

All Reclamation Manual releases are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>

Filed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_