

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
COLORADO STATE OFFICE
2850 YOUNGFIELD STREET
LAKEWOOD, COLORADO 80215**

In Reply Refer To:
1112 (CO-950) I

December 13, 2019

EMS TRANSMISSION 12/13/2019
Information Bulletin No. CO-2020-009

To: All BLM Colorado Employees
From: State Director
Subject: BLM Colorado 2020 Commitment to Safety

As the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Colorado progresses into Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, it is important for you to know our safety perspective and commitment to your safety and health. Each employee should reevaluate his or her commitment to safety and how each of us can contribute to our goal of providing an injury-free environment for employees, volunteers, and visitors. We each have a responsibility to uphold the standards of safety and health; it is an integral part of everything we do on a daily basis. Ensuring the safety of our employees, volunteers, contract workers, and visiting public is our most important consideration.

Our safety regulations reflect the diversity of our multiple-use mission. "Safety" means different things to each of us in the performance of our duties. In times of conflicting priorities, increased security threats and heavy workloads, we commit to returning all of our employees home to their families every night. We believe that operating safely contributes positively to our mission.

We need to ensure that we are individually and collectively adhering to the safety rules and requirements that are an integral part of our daily duties. It is important to remind employees about these rules and requirements that protect us. This should be done every day, not just at the start of a new season. Safety is not a negotiable priority that can be adjusted as conditions or budgets change and should never be compromised to save cost or time.

If you are a wildland firefighter, you must adhere to Standard Firefighting Orders and Watch Out Situations, in addition to the Lookouts - Communications - Escape Routes - Safety Zones (LCES) principles. For an employee operating an off-highway vehicle, it means completing proper training, ensuring all required personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn, and completing vehicle inspections. All employees should follow standard operating procedures and practice risk management to complete a task and not take unsafe shortcuts.

Many BLM employees spend hours operating a government vehicle in a variety of road, traffic, and weather conditions. Other than wildland firefighting, time spent behind the wheel of a vehicle is the most hazardous activity that many of us will engage in on a regular basis as part of our duties. Motor vehicle accidents are one of the most common issues our agency faces, resulting in personal injuries, property damages, or both.

We urge all employees to adhere to driving policies, conduct vehicle and trailer inspections, use seatbelts, and follow the BLM's "no texting while driving" rule. Vehicle operators must remain focused on driving; maintain concentration and situational awareness; use sound judgment; and base speed upon the posted limit, weather, and current road conditions. Always take that extra moment to check for clearance to prevent backing into a stationary object such as a tree or rock, and if you have a passenger, ask them to get out and act as a spotter. Do not drive when fatigued.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for protecting our employees and government property and must proactively implement safety policies. All employees must receive a safety orientation. Employees are expected to follow safety rules and regulations, participate in safety-related training, wear the appropriate PPE as required, and report unsafe conditions and situations to their supervisor. Safety and occupational health is a shared responsibility among managers, supervisors, and employees – it takes every employee to keep the safety system working.

Across BLM Colorado, for many years, the primary cause of employee injuries has been "Slips, Trips, and Falls." These may occur while in the field, hiking to a worksite, working on a fireline, or while walking across a slippery parking lot. Employees are encouraged to become a *Defensive Walker*: be attentive; scan ahead to pick out the best route, and then look closer for more precise foot placement; wear appropriate footwear with good traction and support; ensure safe foot placement when stepping – beware of roots, sticks, loose rocks or icy spots; and use shorter strides. Injuries often happen when we are in a hurry. A breakdown of the FY 2019 Colorado BLM Injuries and Property Damages report is posted under Announcements on the [COSO Safety page](#).

If you have any questions regarding the BLM Colorado Safety Program, please contact your local safety professional or Kevin Cohenour, State Safety Manager, at (970) 240-5344 or kcohenou@blm.gov.

Signed by:
Gregory P. Shoop
Associate State Director

Authenticated by:
Brian Klein
Colorado State Records Administrator