

**United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Wildlife Services Directive**

**WS 2.435
September 9, 2024**

EXPLOSIVES USE AND SAFETY

1. PURPOSE

To establish procedures and accountability for the safe, secure handling and training requirements for the use of explosives as a tool to remove beaver dams for beaver damage management by Wildlife Services (WS) employees.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces WS Directive 2.435 dated July 03, 2009

3. AUTHORITY

Authority to promulgate a policy addressing use of explosives materials in Wildlife Services activities is pursuant to The Act of March 2, 1931 (7 USC 8351-8352, as amended).

4. POLICY

- a. WS use, storage, and transportation of explosives will be in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- b. WS employees may only use explosive materials and components approved by the WS Explosives Safety Sub-Committee.
- c. WS employees are authorized to use explosives covered by this directive on official WS projects as directed by their State Director or Project Leader.
- d. WS employees must receive training and be certified according to WS policy before using explosives. There may be additional state specific requirements for training, licenses or permits. These additional requirements must be met before an employee is authorized to use explosives to remove beaver dams.
- e. Explosive materials must not be distributed to individuals or agencies outside of WS.
- f. WS employees are not authorized to use, handle, or dispose of explosives belonging to other individuals or agencies. Obtaining explosives from any source other than licensed distributors or manufactures is prohibited.

- g. A request to use explosives for something other than removing beaver dams for beaver damage management must be made through the Explosives Safety Sub-Committee to the WS Management Team for approval.
- h. Only certified WS Explosives Specialists who have successfully completed the WS advanced explosives safety training are authorized to use delay detonator systems.
- i. Accidents, theft, or loss
 - (1) An employee with knowledge of theft or loss of any explosive material must immediately notify their supervisor and the incident must be reported to the WS Deputy Administrator through the supervisory chain of command. The employee must then contact local law enforcement and the Explosives Safety Sub-Committee Chair. Finally, the State Director/NWRC Project Leader or their designee must report the incident within 24 hours to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), U.S. Bomb Data Center.

ATF – U.S. Bomb Data Center contact and reporting information:

Phone: 1-800-461-8841 (1-800-800-3855 on weekends or after-hours)

Fax: 866-927-4570 Email: USBDC@ATF.gov

Obtain a police report and complete the ATF Form 5400.5, Report of Theft or Loss-Explosive Materials, and submit any additional reports, documents, or invoices as required.

- (2) Any suspicious, unusual activity, attempted theft of explosives, break-ins or attempted break-ins into buildings storing explosive materials must be reported in a timely manner to local law enforcement and the Explosives Safety Sub-Committee Chair. Any incident must also be reported to the WS Deputy Administrator, through the supervisory chain of command.
- (3) All accidents must be immediately reported by the supervisor to the APHIS Safety, Health, and Environmental Protection Branch, WS Safety and Health Manager, and the WS Explosives Safety Sub-Committee Chair. Additionally, accidents must be reported to the WS Deputy Administrator, through the supervisory chain of command.

5. BACKGROUND

Explosives are an efficient and cost-effective tool for removing beaver dams causing damage to agriculture, property, natural resources, or threaten public safety or health. Explosives contain regulated materials requiring specific safety, security, storage, transportation, and records maintenance procedures.

6. DEFINITIONS

- a. Explosives Safety Instructor: Qualified WS instructor authorized to train personnel in approved procedures, agency policy, and in the safe handling and use of explosives.
- b. Explosives Specialist Candidate: WS employee nominated by the WS State Director/ Project Leader for explosives training and certification.
- c. Explosives Specialist: A WS employee who, after satisfying all WS explosives training and evaluation requirements, is certified by the Explosives Safety Sub-Committee Chair to prepare, execute, and conduct blasting activities.
- d. Advanced Explosives Specialist: A Certified Explosives Specialist who has successfully completed the WS advanced explosives training course on multiple and delay detonator techniques.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

- a. State Directors and Project Leaders are responsible for ensuring that explosives magazine inspection, record keeping, and inventory requirements are met in accordance with WS Explosives Safety Manual guidelines. These requirements include biannual magazine site safety inspections (APHIS Form 256-5, Safety Inspection Checklist) and physical inventories of all explosives on hand and recorded on WS Form 22. These physical inventory records will be reviewed and signed by the State Director or Project Leader or their designee to certify accuracy and should physically remain with the explosives magazine when not being reviewed.
- b. All WS use, storage, and transportation of explosives covered by this directive shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations (unless exempted); procedures outlined in the WS Explosives Safety Manual; and requirements set forth in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration standard for explosives found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 29, part 1910.109, Explosives and Blasting Agents.
- c. Explosives Specialists must notify local emergency response agencies and officials (Fire Department/Fire Marshall) concerning the location of explosives storage.
- d. A WS basic explosives training course is required for certification. The certification process requires:
 - (1.) WS State Directors/Project Leaders must nominate Explosives Specialist Candidates

under their supervision for explosives training.

(2.) Explosives Specialist Candidates must complete a minimum of 24 hours of instruction in explosives safety, explosives handling procedures, and security and legal compliance, taught by an Explosives Safety Instructor.

(3.) Explosives Specialist Candidates who satisfy all the WS explosives safety training requirements must undergo a review by the Explosives Safety Sub-Committee to evaluate certification eligibility.

(a.) The Explosives Safety Sub-Committee will make a certification recommendation to the Explosives Safety Sub-Committee Chair.

(b.) The Explosives Safety Sub-Committee Chair is the WS official who must determine the candidate's certification as an Explosives Specialist.

(c.) Explosives Specialist certification remains valid for 3 years from the date of certification, or until revoked or suspended by the Explosives Safety Sub-Committee.

e. Explosives Specialists shall complete a minimum of 8 hours of approved explosives safety training every three years to maintain WS certification. If an employee does not maintain certification and wants to be recertified, the employee must retake the WS basic explosives training course.

f. Storage and Transportation

(1) Explosive materials shall be stored and transported in accordance with WS Standard Operating Procedure for Storage and Transportation of Explosives (FP/WS 006.00).

(2) Inventory requirements include biannual magazine site safety inspections (APHIS Form 256-5, Safety Inspection Checklist or WS Form 39 WS Self-Inspection Checklist-Residential Storage Sites for Pesticides, Pyrotechnics, Rocket Net Charges, and/or Incidental Explosive Materials).

(3) The appropriate Safety Data Sheet (SDS) shall be kept with the magazine.

8. SCOPE

This Directive is applicable to all WS personnel.

9. REFERENCES

- a. 27 CFR Part 555 – Commerce in Explosives, Subpart G, Records and Reports.
- b. 27 CFR Part 555 – Commerce in Explosives, Subpart K, Storage.
- c. 27 CFR Part 555 – Commerce in Explosives, Subpart I, Unlawful Acts, Penalties, Seizures and Forfeitures.
- d. 29 CFR Part 1910.109 – Explosives and Blasting Agents.
- e. 49 CFR Parts 106, 107, 110, 171 through 180, and 397 – Department of Transportation.
- f. Title 18, U.S. Code, Chapter 40, Section 842, Unlawful Acts
- g. APHIS Safety and Health Manual (Revised 6/30/04).
- h. WS Explosives Safety Manual.
- i. APHIS Form 256-5, Safety Inspection Checklist;
<https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/aphis-mrp-emss/SVCS/SHEPHome/Safety/SitePages/Home.aspx>.
- j. Institute of Makers of Explosives Safety Library Publication 22;
https://www.ime.org/aws/IME/pt/sd/product/32566/_PARENT/layout_details/false
- k. WS Form 39, WS Self Inspection Checklist- Residential Storage Sites for Pesticides, Pyrotechnics, Rocket Net Charges, and/or Incidental Explosive Materials.
- l. WS Form 22, Explosives Inventory Record.
- m. Wildlife Services Standard Operating Procedure FP/WS 006.00 Storage and Transportation of Explosives; [WS Intranet and Program Resources - Directives_SOPs - Order Series Number \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

Janet L. Bucknall
Deputy Administrator