

# Safety-Gram

## Title 45, Chapter 11

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### “Can You Hear Me Now?” Communication and Working Alone

Miners working alone are more vulnerable than those who do not. They don't have colleagues nearby for support and it's more difficult for them to summon help if things go wrong. Lone workers must be able to communicate with others, be heard, or be seen, especially in hazardous conditions.



**Section 919 (2)** - No employee shall be assigned, allowed, or required to perform work alone in any area **where hazardous conditions** exist that would endanger his safety unless he can **communicate with others, can be heard, or can be seen.**

Mining is **inherently dangerous work**, and hazardous conditions can exist throughout a mine that endanger workers. So how do companies comply with this law? Do companies need to require workers to work in pairs? No, **communication is the answer.** Employees working in isolated areas of the mine must be able to **communicate with others with two-way radios, CB radios, and/or cell phones.** While cell phones are convenient, a reliable signal is not always possible at all mining locations. If a reliable cell phone signal isn't possible, then other means of communication must be used such as two-way or CB radios.

**Section 919 (1)** - Each place of work shall be visited by a certified **person at the beginning of, and at least once during each shift** and more frequently as is necessary to insure work is being done in a **safe manner.**

Mine managers, superintendents, and supervisors must check on their employees **throughout the shift.** Employees that are working in isolated areas would need to be checked on **“more frequently as is necessary to insure work is being done in a safe manner.”**

**Section 919 (5)** - Where telephone service is not available, **emergency communications shall be provided** to the nearest point of assistance;

and

**Section 919 (6)** - Arrangements shall be made **in advance** for obtaining emergency medical assistance and transportation for injured persons.

If your mine does not have reliable phone service, you must have **additional means to contact help.** Many Oklahoma mines are rural, and emergency services may not even know the mine is out there. Make sure you have contacted the emergency services that would respond to your mine for an accident, injury, or fire to let them know **where you are located and what is the best route to your location.** Hopefully, you never have to make that call, but have an **EAP (emergency action plan)** in place before you do.

