

8. SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS AND THE LOCAL POPULATION

Objective: To be proactive in implementing good practices for health and safety performance in all exploration activities and seek continual improvement.

Introduction

Health and safety are of immediate and personal concern to workers and local communities, as well as a basic human right. As such, explorers, their employees and contractors must conduct their activities in ways that protect the health and safety of workers and local communities.

Policy and Management Process

In developing systems for the management of health and safety, explorers are advised to:

- a. Adopt and make public policies and procedures for the management of health and safety (see Principle 1);
- b. Apply relevant national and sub-national regulations and educate themselves on

- international good practice guidelines;²³
- c. Adopt and implement a management structure with adequate resources, defined responsibilities, and accountability for health and safety performance at the corporate and project levels; and
 - d. Provide education, training, equipment and supplies to ensure a safe working environment and to deal with specific local health risks.

Risk Prevention

Sound health and safety programs are based on a full understanding of risks, and require mechanisms to avoid and/or manage these risks to be in place from the earliest stage of an exploration project. Explorers are therefore advised to:

- a. Assess existing and potential risks to the health and safety of employees and local communities and develop plans and

²³ See the World Bank Group's *Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines* at www.ifc.org/sustainability

procedures to avoid, manage or mitigate these risks (see Principle 4);

- b.** Develop site and project-specific checklists to facilitate the management of risks and hazards;
- c.** Provide health and safety information and training that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for local stakeholders and affected communities;
- d.** Adopt and make public policies and procedures for the transportation of persons, equipment and hazardous materials to and from exploration work sites, and have in place provisions for appropriate action should there be an accident involving persons or the release of hazardous material;
- e.** Take reasonable steps to verify that drivers, aircraft pilots and boat operators employed or contracted to provide transportation to and from exploration work sites are qualified for the tasks they are expected to perform;

- f.** Take reasonable steps to verify that contractors are able to meet the health and safety standards required and that vehicles, aircraft and boats used to access exploration work sites are properly equipped and maintained;
- g.** Establish the capacity to deal with accidents and to deliver emergency medical assistance in the absence of outside agencies in coordination with local stakeholders and affected communities and, where possible, government or non-governmental organizations;
- h.** Periodically test procedures to respond to emergencies; and
- i.** Review and, where necessary, revise policies and procedures in light of experience gained from every test, incident, or accident.

Monitoring and Reporting

Explorers are advised to implement procedures for monitoring and reporting on health and safety performance (see Principle 2) in order to inform management, government, local communities, shareholders and other interested parties. It is recommended that explorers promptly report any accident or health incident to local communities and appropriate authorities, and assist with any rescue, containment or preventative measures that are required. Explorers are also encouraged to consider the need to:

- a.** Monitor, investigate and report on accidents and incidents in a manner that encourages continuous learning and improvement of health and safety performance; and
- b.** Prepare periodic reports on health and safety performance and share such reports with local stakeholders and affected communities.