

Near Blasting: Know the Signals and Release

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Why this matters

People working near blasting need a clear way to leave, stay out and know when return is authorized. A blast sound or settling dust does not establish that the area is safe.

Objective: Explain the assigned safe location, warning signals and authorized return process.

Key hazards or failure points

Unexpected entry; missed signals; conflicting traffic; unaccounted workers; flying material; misfires; storms; premature return; handling suspect explosive material.

Practical controls

- Coordinate with the blaster in charge before nearby work. Follow the current blasting plan, posted signal code and restrictions on access, ignition sources and equipment.
- Use the assigned safe location and route. Responsible blasting personnel establish the required distance or cover and control the blast area; other crews do not choose their own boundary.
- Stay outside until the designated all-clear follows the required inspection. Never handle suspect material, investigate a misfire or attempt to fight a fire threatening explosives.

Verify It in the Field

Before work, ask each affected crew to explain the posted warning, blast and all-clear signals. Confirm the communication method reaches today's workers and other affected operations.

From the safe side, confirm the assigned location, route, access-control coverage and accountability with the blaster. Resolve deliveries or adjacent work that could enter the restricted area.

Name who communicates release and how uncertainty is reported from safety. Record the current coordination and restrictions. Do not use elapsed time, absent activity or cleared dust as substitute evidence.

Stop and reassess

Stay out for a missing or unclear signal, lost access control, unaccounted person, suspected misfire or uncertain release. Follow the blaster's withdrawal instructions for electrical storms and other changes. Report concerns from safety; only authorized blasting personnel resolve them.

Ask the crew

1. What do the posted signals mean here?
2. Where is our assigned safe location?
3. Who gives the all-clear after inspection?

Nearby-crew awareness; not explosives handling, firing or misfire training.

Sources: OSHA 1926.900, 1926.909 and 1926.910; actual blasting plan.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/working-near-blasting-boundaries-release