

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

**WS 2.626
7/10/2023**

**ROCKET NET CHARGES, ELECTRIC MATCHES AND INCIDENTAL EXPLOSIVE
MATERIALS USE AND SAFETY**

1. PURPOSE

To establish procedures and accountability for the safe and secure handling and use of explosive rocket net charges and other incidental explosive materials for Wildlife Services (WS) personnel and to ensure that applicable laws, regulations, and policies are observed.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces WS Directive 2.625, Pyrotechnics, Rocket Net Charges, and Incidental Explosive Materials, dated, January 6th, 2006.

3. AUTHORITY

- a. 7 U.S.C. 8351 to 8353, and 16 U.S.C. 667, authorizes officers, agents, and employees of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) to conduct a program of wildlife services and to enter into agreements with states, local jurisdictions, individuals, and public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions for the purpose of conducting such services.
- b. Authority to promulgate a policy addressing employee responsibilities is pursuant to USDA Departmental Regulation 4070-735-001, dated October 2007.

4. BACKGROUND

Rocket and cannon-net systems can be an effective live capture tool for surveillance, research, and wildlife damage management. Rocket/cannon net charges contain regulated explosive materials requiring specific safety, security, storage, transportation, and records maintenance procedures. Incidental components of wildlife damage management tools classified as explosive materials include electric matches.

5. POLICY

- a. For official government duties, certified WS personnel are authorized to use only explosive materials and components approved by the WS Explosives Safety Subcommittee.
- b. WS use, storage, transportation, and accountability of explosives must be in

compliance with applicable Federal, state, and local laws and regulations, WS Explosives Safety Manual, WS Rocket Net/Cannon Net Safety Manual, and Storage and Transportation of Rocket Net Charges and Incidental Explosive Materials Standard Operating Procedures FP/WS 005.0.

- c. WS rocket/cannon net certified WS personnel are authorized to use explosives covered by this directive.
- d. WS personnel are not authorized to use, handle, or dispose of rocket net charges or other explosives belonging to other agencies.
- e. Distribution of rocket/cannon net charges to individuals or agencies outside of WS is prohibited.
- f. Obtaining rocket/cannon net charges from any source other than licensed distributors or manufactures is prohibited.
- g. 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.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

- a. Before using rocket/cannon nets, WS personnel must receive the WS' Rocket Net/Cannon Net Safety Training and become WS rocket/cannon net certified.
- b. There may be additional specific state or local requirements for licenses or permits. Unless exempted, the additional requirements must be met before a WS rocket/cannon net certified employee can use, store, or transport rocket nets.
- c. The WS Explosives Safety Sub-Committee Chair is the certifying official with authority to issue, deny, or revoke rocket/cannon net certification.
- d. WS' Rocket Net/Cannon Net Safety Training and certification requirements:
 - (1.) Supervising State Director or NWRC Project Leader must nominate qualified candidates.
 - (2.) Candidates must complete a minimum of 16 hours of official WS training on rocket/cannon net safety, explosives handling procedures, security, and legal compliance.
 - (3.) Candidates must demonstrate safe and proficient use of rocket/cannon net components and use procedures approved for WS field operations.
 - (4.) After the candidates satisfy all WS training requirements, the WS Explosives Safety Sub-Committee will issue its certification recommendation to the sub-committee chair.
 - (5.) The WS Explosives Safety Sub-Committee Chair will determine the candidate's eligibility for certification, and, if approved, issue rocket/cannon net certification.
- e. To maintain rocket/cannon net certification, the employee must complete a minimum of 8 hours of approved Rocket Net/Cannon Net Safety Refresher Training every three years. Personnel whose certification expires must complete the 16-hour WS Rocket Net/Cannon Net Safety Training and certification requirements.
- f. State Directors and NWRC Project Leaders are responsible for ensuring that explosives magazine inspections, record keeping, and inventory requirements are met in accordance with Rocket Net/Cannon Net Safety Manual and WS Storage and Transportation of Rocket Net Charges and Incidental Explosive Materials Standard Operating Procedures FP/WS 005.0.

7. SCOPE

This Directive is applicable to all WS personnel.

8. REFERENCES

- a. ATF Publication 5400.7, Federal Explosives Law and Regulations
- b. Title 27 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 555, Commerce in Explosives
- c. Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1910.109, Explosives and Blasting Agents
- d. APHIS Safety and Health Manual
- e. WS SOP FP/WS 005.0, Storage and Transportation of Rocket Net Charges and Incidental Explosive Materials
- f. WS Rocket Net/Cannon Net Safety Manual
- g. WS Explosives Safety Manual

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