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| POLICY: | | | NUMBER: |
| WORKING ALONE GUIDELINE | | | WP-73 |
| | | | Page 1 of 2 |
| PREPARED BY: | AUTHORIZED BY: | CLASSIFICATION: | EFFECTIVE: |
| Facilities Management (FM) |  Elizabeth Krische | Work Procedure | February 1, 2022 |
| | | | SUPERSEDES: |
| | | | NEW |

A worker is “alone” at work when they are on their own and cannot be seen or heard by another person for longer than one hour. While it is not always hazardous to work alone, it can be when other circumstances are present. It is important to assess, communicate and mitigate risk to ensure health and safety.

PURPOSE:

The Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act and related regulations prohibit working alone in specific high-risk situations. To promote a positive safety culture, FM is committed to establishing safety standards in moderate and low-risk situations.

Scope:

This guideline applies to all FM staff working alone (both on and off campus).

Roles and Responsibilities:

In keeping with the University’s Health and Safety programs and Internal Responsibility System:

FM Supervisors (Managers and Leads) must:

- identify situations where workers, including themselves, work alone;
- identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm
- analyze and evaluate the risk associated with the hazards
- determine appropriate ways to eliminate the hazard or control the risk
- establish general rules for working alone within the unit; and
- ensure that staff are aware of, and have been trained on, the requirements when working alone

Workers should:

- ensure supervisor’s knowledge and approval before working alone;
- participate in risk assessments and development of controls;
- follow the protocol put into place and adhere to safe work practices; and
- advise of any change in conditions, circumstances or deficiencies in the protocol or safe work practices

Procedures:

1. Working alone should be minimized whenever possible.
2. Working alone requires Supervisor (Manager/Lead) knowledge and approval.
3. Approval for working alone must consider specific circumstances including, but not limited to:
 - tasks and hazards involved in the work;
 - possible consequences resulting from a worst-case scenario;
 - the possibility of an incident or injury that would prevent an individual from calling for help;
 - access to emergency assistance;
 - the time the work is to be conducted; and
 - the individual’s training and experience level.
4. Conduct a risk assessment using the Working Alone Plan (fillable PDF) to identify the hazards involved and safety protocols in place.

| Level of Risk | Outcome | Examples |
|-----------------|--|---|
| High | Working alone prohibited as per applicable regulations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confined space entry • Electrical systems rated at more than 750 volts • Trenches • Portable ladder that exceeds 6 meters in length and is not securely fastened, or work with a ladder that is likely to be endangered by traffic • Use of fall arrest equipment (without travel restraint) or scaffolds • Machines and power tools that may cause critical injury (e.g. lathe, table saw, chain saw) • Work with acutely toxic material (e.g. cyanides, fumigants, hydrofluoric acid) as described in Safety Data Sheet (SDS) • Use of supplied air or self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) • Risk of drowning • Use of a vehicle, boom or similar equipment near live power lines where it is possible for any part of the equipment or its load to contact the live power line • Open flame associated with flammable solvents • Hot work where a fire watch is required • Other tasks which based upon hazard analysis is seemed to require more than one person for safety reasons |
| Moderate | A Working Alone Plan is developed and all workers are trained | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large volumes of chemicals • Exposed, energized electrical systems • Risk Group 2 Biohazard labs • Work with materials acutely hazardous to health • Extreme temperature environments • Handling of cash • Dealing directly with the public • Work in isolated areas (Roofs, Mechanical Rooms etc.) • Working in a higher risk environment such as High Voltage rooms |
| Low | May work alone with access to communication device and/or check-in procedure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custodial work • Building maintenance with low risk • Laboratory work with minimal risk (analytical equipment, monitoring equipment or process, work not involving hazardous materials) • Routine office work or study |

REFERENCES:

- **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety**
<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/workingalone.html>
- **IHSA - Working Alone Guideline:** https://www.ihsa.ca/pdfs/safety_talks/working-alone.pdf
- **PSHSA - Protecting Workers Who Work Alone:**
<https://www.pshsa.ca/resources/protecting-workers-who-work-alone>
- **Working Alone Plan** (https://www.uwo.ca/fm/Working_Alone_Plan.pdf)

WORKING ALONE PLAN

Department:

Date:

Manager:

Area(s):

Procedure

1. Working alone, especially after regular business hours, should be minimized whenever possible.
2. Working alone requires manager or lead knowledge or approval.
3. Work tasks are divided as per the risk assessment below (examples are found in the guide).

| Tasks | Risk Assessment | Comments |
|-------|-----------------|----------|
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4. **Check-In:** Workers should complete periodic check-ins via (select the chosen method):

- Manager or lead every minute(s)
- WSCS every minute(s)

5. **Security:** [Insert any department specific security or after-hours information here](#)

6. **Emergencies:** Report emergencies immediately to 911 or to Western Special Constable Services at 519-661-2111 ext. 83300. Promptly follow the directions of those responsible for emergency response during an emergency.