

### Purpose

Working alone in certain circumstances, situations, or environments can be unsafe and requires special arrangements to minimize potential situations and hazards. These procedures provide a guideline for employees, supervisors and students to assist in the identification of hazards associated with working alone.

### Legislation

Adherence to these procedures ensures compliance with Section 35 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations:

- 35(1) In this section, “to work alone” means to work at a worksite as the only worker of the employer or contractor at that worksite, in circumstances where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of injury, ill health or emergency.
- 35(2) Where a worker is required to work alone or at an isolated place of employment, an employer or contractor, in consultation with the committee, the representative or, where there is no committee or representative, the workers, shall identify the risks arising from the conditions and circumstances of the worker’s work or the isolation of the place of employment.
- 35(3) An employer or contractor shall take all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or reduce the risks identified pursuant to subsection (2).
- 35(4) The steps to be taken to eliminate or reduce the risks pursuant to subsection (3):
- (a) must include the establishment of an effective communication system that consists of:
    - (i) radio communication;
    - (ii) phone or cellular phone communication; or
    - (iii) any other means that provides effective communication in view of the risks involved; and
  - (b) may include any of the following:
    - (i) regular contact by the employer or contractor with the worker working alone or at an isolated place of employment;
    - (ii) limitations on, or prohibitions of, specified activities;
    - (iii) establishment of minimum training or experience, or other standards of competency;
    - (iv) provision of personal protective equipment;
    - (v) establishment of safe work practices or procedures;
    - (vi) provision of emergency supplies for use in travelling under conditions of extreme cold or other inclement weather conditions.

### Definitions

“**Normal working hours**” means the hours of the University of Regina when there are typically people available to help in the case of an incident, as outlined in the respective collective agreements or agreed upon working arrangements. However, some areas/tasks have normal work hours that do not fall within this range. In cases where people would not typically be

available to help, area/task specific Working Alone Procedures should be formulated and the department or Faculty should stipulate what they consider normal work hours to be.

**Supervisor** means a person who is authorized by the University to oversee or direct the work of employees or students, including, but not limited to, Deans, Directors, Department and Unit Heads, Academic Staff Members, Managers, Foremen and Lead hands.

**“Working alone or at an isolated place of employment”** according to the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* means “to work at a worksite as the only worker of the employer or contractor at that worksite, in circumstances where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of injury, ill health, or emergency.” At the University of Regina, various work environments and situations call for various interpretations of “working alone.” For example, an employee who comes in alone after normal working hours to perform paperwork duties may not be considered to be “working alone.” In this situation, assistance is readily available by telephone communication with Campus Security. However, if an employee comes in after normal working hours to do laboratory testing with hazardous materials, assistance may be more urgent and less accessible. In this situation, the employee may be defined as “working alone” and require limitations on his/her duties through a Working Alone Policy.

**“Worksite”** means any place where work is performed, including locations such as laboratories, offices, or fieldwork.

## Responsibilities

1. Supervisors will:
  - 1.1 ensure area/task specific Working Alone Procedures are developed, implemented, communicated, and enforced, in situations where employees or students are working alone or conducting fieldwork outside of normal working hours as defined in this policy.
  - 1.2 review each worksite under his/her control to identify circumstances where individuals work alone in situations where there is increased risk of injury or assistance is not readily available. For example, after regular business hours.
  - 1.3 ensure all reasonably practical steps are taken to protect the health and safety of those employees or students.
  - 1.4 complete, or require completion of, the Working Alone Risk Identification/Limitation Form and the Working Alone Procedures form.
    - Describe conditions where working alone is permitted and indicate which duties may be conducted and which are prohibited. **It is strongly recommended that handling of hazardous materials or performing hazardous activities be prohibited when the employee is working alone.**
    - Identify risks to the employee in terms of the nature of their work, isolation, and conditions at the worksite.
    - Identify and take any necessary steps to eliminate or reduce identified risks (Appendix 2). The steps taken must include:
      - The establishment of an effective communication system that consists of:
        - Radio communication;
        - A phone or cellular phone; or
        - Any other means that provides effective communication commensurate with the risk involved such as personal alarm devices;

- Providing sufficient training and instruction for safe work practices and ensuring minimum standards of competence;
  - Providing applicable personal protective equipment (PPE);
  - Where applicable:
    - Maintaining regular contact with the person working alone; and
    - Providing emergency and survival supplies for working under extreme conditions.
- 1.5 Maintain all documentation within each department or Faculty.
- 1.6 Communicate the procedures to all employees or students who work alone.
2. Employees and Students will:
- 2.1 be governed by the Safety Policy and must comply with the area/task specific Working Alone Policy.

**WORKING ALONE RISK IDENTIFICATION/LIMITATION FORM**

Faculty/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**It is the responsibility of the supervisor to identify any hazardous agents or activities that arise from the conditions and circumstances of the employee's/student's work.**

**It is strongly recommended that handling of hazardous substances or performing hazardous activities be prohibited when an employee or student is working alone.**

Identify hazardous substances the employee/student may handle while working alone:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lab Chemicals     | <input type="checkbox"/> Herbi/Pesti-cides | <input type="checkbox"/> Presurized Gases     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous Waste   | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Chemicals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infectious Agents | <input type="checkbox"/> Liquid Gases      | <input type="checkbox"/> Nuclear Substances   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lasers            | <input type="checkbox"/> None              |   |

Other substances not listed above: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Identify hazardous activities the employee/student may perform while working alone:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Physical Labour                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Work with Power Tools                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Ladders, Scaffolding                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Work with Animals                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work with Heavy Machinery                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather Conditions                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work with High Electric Currents             | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Duties Occur in Isolated Locations  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work with Equipment Under Pressure or Vacuum | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Duties Pose Increased Risk          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enter Confined Workspace                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Duties Outside of Normal Work House |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> None                                    |

Other activities not listed above: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(completed and retained within the department/faculty)

## WORKING ALONE PROCEDURES FORM

**Document all steps taken to eliminate or reduce the identified risks:**

Faculty/Department \_\_\_\_\_

Working Hours \_\_\_\_\_

*The steps taken **must** include the establishment of an effective communication system that consists of:*

**A. Effective communication:**

- Radio communication;
- A phone or cellular phone;
- Any other means that provides effective communication commensurate with the risk involved; or
- Maintaining regular contact with the person working alone.

*If applicable include any of the following:*

**B. Providing**

- written instructions stating limitations

\_\_\_\_\_

and/or

- prohibitions of specific activities while working alone
- \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Providing sufficient training and instruction for safe work practices and ensuring minimum standards of competence**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> WHMIS                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Safety                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TDG                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher training    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory Protection/Fit test | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety Orientation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infection Control               | <input type="checkbox"/> Radiation Safety              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lab Safety                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Procedures          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid & CPR                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision and Safety        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confined Space Entry            | <input type="checkbox"/> Ladder safety                 |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                   |

**D. Providing applicable personal protective equipment (PPE)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye protection         | <input type="checkbox"/> Footwear           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hard protection        | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory protection | <input type="checkbox"/> Fall protection    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lead protection        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skin protection        |   |

**E. Providing emergency and survival supplies for working under extreme conditions**

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**It is mandatory that *the supervisor provides site-specific orientation. (Employees must also attend *generic safety training* courses offered through Health, Safety & Environment.) If *additional site-specific safety training* is required, please contact HSE for assistance.***

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Site Specific Orientation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Specific Safety Training Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Designated Employee: \_\_\_\_\_