



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

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## **Working Alone Safety Program**

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Some job functions at The Ohio State University will be performed by lone workers. This program is to encourage awareness and promote safe work procedures for employees who work alone. Working alone describes situations during the course of employment when an employee is

- The only worker at the workplace
- Not directly supervised by the employer
- Working at a site where assistance is not readily available
- In an area where direct contact with a co-worker or supervisor is not available
- In a dangerous area (either due to work processes or likelihood of being robbed)
- Traveling away from the base office to meet clients

1.2 The objectives of the Working Alone Program are:

- Identify hazards to workers working alone and to try to eliminate, minimize or control them
- Provide assistance for workers working alone in the event of an accident or emergency
- Identify responsibilities of employees and supervisors
- Recognize who should not work alone
- Provide training assistance

1.3 The Working Alone Program applies to OSU employees whose job duties require them to work alone in any facets of the job.

## 2.0 Responsibilities

2.1 Environmental Health & Safety maintains, reviews, and updates the Working Alone Safety Program and provides assistance and recommendations at the request of supervisors.

2.2 Employees Working Alone are responsible for:

- 2.2..1 Recognizing the hazards associated with their jobs and how to minimize them.
- 2.2..2 Reporting hazards to supervisors.
- 2.2..3 Working alone only when necessary, rescheduling assignments (when possible) to keep from working alone.
- 2.2..4 Participate in a check-in system by contacting someone at regular intervals.
- 2.2..5 Carry a personal alarm, cell phone or two-way radio. Ensure sufficient operation and battery life.

2.3 Supervisors/Departments are responsible for:

- 2.3..1 Communicating these guidelines to employees, students and contractors through training programs.
- 2.3..2 Ensuring work performed alone or in isolation has a completed risk assessment that has been shared with the lone worker.
- 2.3..3 Adequate control measures are implemented prior to approval of work.
- 2.3..4 Consulting and training staff, students and visitors that work alone.
- 2.3..5 Provide communication devices such as cell phones, radios, personal safety alarms.
- 2.3..6 Ensure employee health and safety.

- 2.3..7 Ensure lone workers understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out.
- 2.3..8 Provide guidance in situations of uncertainty.
- 2.3..9 Implement controls to eliminate or control hazards prior to lone work.
- 2.3..10 Supervision of health and safety issues when checking the progress and quality of work; periodic site visits and discussions in which health and safety issues are raised.
- 2.3..11 Provide video surveillance cameras, limit public access, lock all unused doors, coded cards or keys to control access to buildings, alarms, panic buttons, emergency phones, fire alarm or security guards when necessary.

### 3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Before allowing a worker to work alone, the attached assessment should be completed and the findings recorded. The assessment includes:
  - 3.1..1 Identification of hazards within the area
  - 3.1..2 Identification of methods and frequency of communications
  - 3.1..3 Can any temporary access equipment, such as portable ladders or trestles, be safely handled by one person?
  - 3.1..4 Can all the machinery and goods involved in the workplace be safely handled by one person?
  - 3.1..5 Are there any chemicals or hazardous substances being used that may pose a risk to the worker?
  - 3.1..6 Does the work involve lifting objects too large for one person?
  - 3.1..7 Is more than one person needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment or workplace transport?
  - 3.1..8 Possibility of violence
  - 3.1..9 History of client/customer – is it safe to visit alone?
  - 3.1..10 Medical fitness of the person working alone – possibility of illness
  - 3.1..11 Possibility of accidents – consider the activities taking place e.g. accessing ladders or steps
  - 3.1..12 If the lone worker's first language is not English, are provisions made for clear communications, especially in case of emergency?
  - 3.1..13 Requirements for first aid training
  - 3.1..14 How can supervision/advice be provided easily
  - 3.1..15 Methods of raising the alarm in the event of no contact within an agreed time
  - 3.1..16 Can a person be left alone at their place of work?
- 3.2 The risk assessment should help decide the right level of supervision.
- 3.3 Identify the hazards of the work, assess the risks involved, and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks.
- 3.4 It is important to talk to employees and their safety representatives as they are a valuable source of information and advice. This will help to ensure that all relevant hazards have been identified and appropriate controls chosen.

#### **4.0 Who shouldn't work alone?**

- 4.1 Some job functions have inherent hazards that will require more than one employee at the job site.
- 4.2 Some examples of work functions that present hazards that require more than one worker include:
  - 4.2..1 Permit-required Confined Spaces
  - 4.2..2 High energy materials (radioactive, high temperature)
  - 4.2..3 Cryogenic (low temperature) materials/processes
  - 4.2..4 Toxic gases, liquids or solids
  - 4.2..5 Flammable liquids
  - 4.2..6 High pressure or high voltage systems
  - 4.2..7 Using fall arrest equipment and scaffolding
  - 4.2..8 Equipment or machinery
  - 4.2..9 Extreme weather conditions
  - 4.2..10 Shop Machinery
  - 4.2..11 Restraining or handling animals capable of causing injury
  - 4.2..12 Services where cash or goods are handled that may attract criminals
  - 4.2..13 Certain laboratory work

#### **5.0 Training:**

- 5.1 Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. Training may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations. Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and /or trained to understand the risks and how to fully take precautions.
- 5.2 Set limits for the worker as to what can and cannot be done while working alone.
- 5.3 Ensure employees are competent to deal with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, such as when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor.
- 5.4 Those individuals working alone must have the appropriate training for the identified hazards, training can include providing workers with a safety checklist to assist them to identify and anticipate their own hazards.
- 5.5 Individuals who perform hazardous work will be provided written safe work procedures by the supervisor.
- 5.6 All equipment must be used as intended, according to the manufacturer's specification and as set out in the safe work procedure. All equipment must be maintained in good working order.
- 5.7 Appropriate first aid and emergency supplies will be provided by the employer. The employee must know where first aid and emergency supplies are stored and how to use them properly. Employees shall also be trained in methods of notifying the university or a supervisor when the needs arise.
- 5.8 Individuals who may be at risk of violence because they work alone may need training in the use of different communication equipment and/or how to behave when confronted with a situation such as an intruder. The employee will work with the supervisor to identify the potential situation, options for its resolution and the supervisor will arrange for appropriate training, as required.

5.9 Those individuals working alone and with cash will receive special training in violence prevention procedures for robbery.

**Appendix A: Working Alone Checklist**

Working Alone Checklist		
Employee Name: _____	Date: _____	
Contact Details: _____		
Contact Phone Number(s): _____		
Emergency Phone Numbers: _____		
Department: _____	Supervisor Name: _____	
Name and Contact Info. for Person checking on employee: _____		
Method to be used for checking on employee: _____		
Intervals the employee will be contacted: _____		
Location of Activity: _____		
Has a risk assessment (must be attached) been conducted for this task?	YES	NO
Is the employee trained in working alone procedures?	YES	NO
Is the employee aware of all risks associated with the task?	YES	NO
Has a safety inspection been completed prior to operating any equipment?	YES	NO
Have emergency plans been discussed?	YES	NO
Is Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and training on proper use available?	YES	NO
Have Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) been provided and discussed?	YES	NO
Have additional controls been put in place during this task/activity?	YES	NO
Communication Arrangements: _____		
Action to be taken if contact is not made in accordance with above schedule: _____		
<p>Declaration:</p> <p>I, _____ am aware and agree to abide by all The Ohio State University and other applicable procedures when working outside normal business hours, and/or working alone, and/or in isolation. I agree to abide by any additional requirements as listed in the attached risk assessment for this activity.</p>		
Signature of Employee: _____	Date: _____	
Signature of Supervisor: _____	Date: _____	
Duration of Approval: From _____	To _____	