

Working Alone

Office of Risk Management

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This document is intended primarily for supervisors at the University of Ottawa (uOttawa) and addresses the hazards and recommended procedures related to working alone (i.e., in isolation). The guidelines outline what it means to work alone, how to identify and reduce (or control) hazards, what to do in emergency situations and how to report accidents, incidents and workplace violence.

While working alone is not specifically regulated by the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA), there can be significant risks associated with working alone and, therefore, a general duty exists under the OHSA. This means it is imperative that the applicable workplace parties (e.g., supervisors) take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of workers, students and other individuals working in isolation.

Scope

This document provides general guidelines that can be applied across uOttawa. Given the wide range of job tasks at uOttawa, supervisors are encouraged to consider circumstances that might influence any potential risks associated with working alone in various uOttawa workplaces (including any space where work occurs outside the uOttawa campus, such as in the case of field work or research). Supervisors are encouraged to use these guidelines as the basis for tailored processes and procedures, when appropriate, to fit special or unique situations.

ORGANIZATIONAL STATEMENT

Working alone is strongly discouraged. Nevertheless, the University recognizes that, in unique or special circumstances, persons may need to work in isolation.

If working alone is unavoidable or deemed necessary, the worker must obtain advance approval from their supervisor. Each request is considered unique and must involve advance consultation with the supervisor. It is recommended that the supervisor perform a hazard identification and risk assessment of the activity and formally approve the work activity in advance (e.g., via email).

DEFINITIONS

Accident: An unexpected event causing injury, illness or even death (see also critical injury) or involving exposure of a person to a harmful substance.

Critical injury: As defined in [Regulation 834](#) of the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), an injury of a serious nature that:

- a. Places life in jeopardy,
- b. Produces unconsciousness,
- c. Results in substantial loss of blood,
- d. Involves the fracture of a leg or arm but not a finger or toe,
- e. Involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot but not a finger or toe,
- f. Consists of burns to a major portion of the body or
- g. Causes the loss of sight in an eye.

Hazard: The inherent property of a substance, process or activity that predisposes it to the potential for causing harm to health, safety or human welfare.

Incident: An undesired event, such as a fire, spill or breakage of material, resulting in damage to property or the environment.

Risk: The chance that someone or something will be adversely affected in a particular way by an unintended exposure to a hazard.

Supervisor: As defined in uOttawa's [Procedure 14-1, Internal Responsibility Procedure for Health and Safety Issues](#), made under [Policy 77, Occupational Health and Safety](#), a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker or another person and, depending on the workplace relationship, can include the president, a vice-president, a director, a dean, a manager or a principle investigator.

The determination of whether a person is a supervisor does not depend on that person's job title but on whether the person is responsible for a location (for example, an office or laboratory) where work is performed on a paid or unpaid basis or whether the person gives direction for completing work performed by workers, students, visitors, volunteers or learners.

Visitor or volunteer: A person who is not a worker or student but who performs work at the University workplace to help out or for other reasons associated with education or training.

Worker: As defined under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#):

- A person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation.
 - NOTE: At uOttawa, students hired by the University to perform paid Work –Study Program duties or co-operative education placement duties for the University are considered workers.
- A secondary school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled.
- A person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university, private career college or other postsecondary institution.
- Such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to an employer for no monetary compensation.

Working alone – A situation where a worker (or other applicable person) is working in isolation or cannot be seen or heard by another person or where assistance may not be immediately and readily available to the individual if an emergency, an injury or an illness arises. The terms **working alone** and **working in isolation** are used interchangeably in these guidelines.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All workplace parties have specific roles and responsibilities, which can be found in [Procedure 14-1, Internal Responsibility Procedure for Health and Safety Issues](#) created under [Policy 77, Occupational](#)

[Health and Safety](#). Below is a brief description of the responsibilities of both workers (including students) and supervisors related to working in isolation.

Workers

- Must seek approval from their supervisor to work in isolation prior to commencing work activity.
- Must abide by the decision of their supervisor.
- Must work in accordance with the hazard identification and risk assessment conducted by their supervisor.
- Check in with safe person or supervisor (as applicable).
- Debrief with their supervisor after completing work activity.

Supervisors

- Conduct hazard identification and risk assessment.
- Communicate results of hazard identification and risk assessment to staff members involved.
- Approve or reject working in isolation requests.
- If applicable periodically observe or communicate with individuals working in isolation using pre-established communication means.
- Conduct a debrief with workers under their authority following completion of work activity.

Factors to consider

Working alone is not in and of itself hazardous. However, working alone can increase the risk associated with particular hazards in the workplace. The risks associated with working alone varies depending on the workplace, work location, type of work conducted, interactions with the public or other people or the possible consequences of an emergency, accident, incident, injury, etc. The following are general factors to consider when assessing a work task involving working alone¹.

Length of time the worker will be working alone

- Is it reasonable for the task to be conducted alone?
 - If yes, what is the reasonable length of time for the individual to be alone?
- Can the individual do the work safely alone?
 - If yes, what makes the individual qualified?
- Is the work being done outside regular University business hours (i.e., before 8:45 a.m. or after 5 p.m. from September to May or after 4 p.m. from June to August), on a statutory holiday or during a period in which the building is locked, etc.)?

Communication

- What forms of communication with the worker are available?
- Is it necessary to establish visual contact with the worker or is voice communication sufficient?
- Will emergency communication systems (landline phones, cell phones, panic buttons, etc.) function correctly in work circumstances considered “normal”?

Location of the work

- Is the work being done in an isolated workplace or location?

¹ Adapted from [Working Alone: A Handbook for Small Business](#). WorkSafeBC, p. 3

- Are emergency personnel and first responders able to access the area?
- Is transportation necessary to get to the work location (i.e., located off a uOttawa campus)?

Type of work

- What machinery, tools, or equipment will be used?
- Is fatigue likely to be a factor?
- Is complacency likely to be a factor?
- Does the work involve interactions with others or handling money or valuables?
 - Could an interaction cause another individual to become agitated or aggressive (e.g., by the communication of negative news or results) or handling money or valuables?
- Is the work environment equipped with emergency equipment and supplies (spill kit, first aid kit, emergency eyewash station, emergency shower, etc.)?
 - Is the individual working in isolation trained to use the equipment and supplies?
- Has an emergency plan been established for reasonably foreseeable emergency situations that may arise?

Characteristics of the individual working alone

- Would a pre-existing medical condition or mobility deficiency increase the level of risk?
- Does the worker have an adequate level of experience and training?

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Workers have the right to know and be made aware of hazards they may be exposed to. Thus, supervisors have the responsibility to inform workers about hazards in the workplace. They are also responsible for ensuring a hazard identification procedure is in place and for conducting a risk assessment of the hazards.

It is incumbent on both workers and supervisors to have a solid understanding of the different hazards that exist or may exist in their workplace in order to understand the risks associated with working in isolation.

It is also important to consider high-hazard situations or high-risk activities that have the potential to incapacitate an individual. It is recommended that tasks in such situations and such activities be strictly forbidden when a worker is working in isolation. Some examples of high-risk hazards include those with the potential to cause head injury, loss of consciousness, burns, etc. Some examples of high-risk activities when working alone include:

- Handling money, prescription drugs and valuable items
- Working off site (location off uOttawa campus)
- Working with patients and other activities involving the risk of violence

Hazard identification

During the hazard identification process, note the hazard category (biological, chemical, biochemical, physical, psychological) and the specific type of hazard. There are four elements a supervisor can rely on when identifying and recording hazards:

1. A visual inspection, including a walk-through survey of the workplace
2. Task or job inventories and analyses, such as a list of tasks and time spent on each one

3. A review of relevant reports and audits of any previous incidents or injuries
4. A hazard analysis, to determine probable hazards

Guidelines for hazard identification

- Consider all aspects of the University (e.g., physical location, hours of operation, departments, occupations).
- Take into account previous incidents by reviewing reports and audits and learning from incidents at similar locations (other uOttawa workplaces, universities, institutes, etc.).
- Gather input from workers about their specific work and work activities.
- Have a discussion with supervisors of similar workplaces on campus, in industry, etc.
- Identify high-hazard situations (e.g., those involving chemicals, machinery, etc.).

Risk assessment

After identifying hazards, supervisors must determine the level of risk attributed to each hazard, known as a risk assessment. The risk assessment makes it possible to rank hazards and control measures and identify those that should be addressed immediately and those that can be addressed at a later time. A risk assessment includes identifying the probability (likelihood of an event or exposure and the severity (consequence) of the result of an event or exposure. Likelihood refers to the potential for an event or exposure to occur. Consequence refers to the severity of the harm due to an event or exposure.

Terms used to rank **likelihood**:

- **Almost certain:** Expected to occur *often* during entire project
- **Likely:** Will probably occur *several times* during entire project
- **Possible:** Reasonably expected to occur *at some time* during entire project
- **Unlikely:** Not expected to occur during entire project, but *possible*
- **Rare:** *Not expected* to occur at all during entire project

Terms used to rank **consequence**:

- **Catastrophic:** Results in death, total loss or shutdown of system, significant release into the environment affecting the public or regulatory intervention
- **Major:** Results in permanent impairment, serious lost-time injury, loss or shutdown of part of system, large on-site release into environment
- **Moderate:** Short-term lost-time injury, short-term interruption in use of system, recoverable release into environment
- **Minor:** Minor injury, minor damage to system, minor confined release into the environment
- **Insignificant:** Very minor injury, with consequence less serious than for **Minor**.

Guidelines for risk assessments

- Consider actual risk versus the perception of a risk.
 - Determining the risk of a hazard involves assessing the probability that it may occur. For example, the risk that a worker loses consciousness from working with chemicals in a lab would be **unlikely**.
- Ensure the person conducting the risk assessment (e.g., supervisor) has extensive knowledge of and experience in the workplace, the work activity and the associated procedures. The person

should also have knowledge of the relevant occupational health and safety legislation governing the work or workplace.

- Because risk perception can vary among individuals and therefore be highly subjective, the supervisor should consider involving multiple parties (other supervisors, lead hands, workers, managers, etc.).
- Develop written procedures for moderate and high hazards.
- Consider both standard and non-standard operational situations (e.g., shutdowns, power or network outages, emergencies).
- Identify high-risk activities (e.g., working at heights, with electricity, with the public) and restrict these activities to the extent possible.
- Avoid taking costs into account when doing a risk assessment. Cost can be considered at the conclusion of the assessment but should not be a determining factor.

After identifying hazards and assessing their risk, the supervisor must implement measures to eliminate, mitigate or control the risks.

Eliminating hazards and minimizing risk

When eliminating the hazard is not feasible or possible, control measures are required. There are three main types of hazard control.

- **Engineering controls:** Constructed, designed or altered equipment in the workplace to prevent hazards. Examples of engineering controls include removal or isolation of the hazard, machine guarding, noise-absorbing panelling and ventilation.
- **Administrative controls:** Modified work processes, i.e., a change in how the work is completed. Examples of administrative controls include safety awareness training, preventative maintenance programs, modified work practices, a buddy system and reduction in total exposure time to the hazard.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** Equipment worn by workers to decrease the risk of injury while in contact with chemicals, noise or other hazards in the workplace. Examples of PPE include protective headwear, eyewear, footwear and clothing. Because PPE does not remove or reduce the hazard, it is considered the last line of defence. Nevertheless, PPE is an appropriate way for workers to adequately protect themselves. For specific PPE requirements, refer to uOttawa's [Personal Protective Equipment Guide](#).

SAFE WORK PROCEDURES

Individuals working in isolation and the supervisors of those working in isolation should always seek ways to reduce risk and eliminate or mitigate hazards a worker may face while performing their job duties. The procedures and guidelines for the various situations below should be followed by anyone who will be working in an isolated environment.

Emergencies

While working in isolation, a worker must be aware of the potential for an emergency and be aware of the tools to help them be prepared for what to do in the event one arises (including personal injury or illness). An emergency plan is designed to lay this information out and covers hazard

identification, evaluation, emergency response, evacuation plans, notification of authorities and supplies.

As part of its “Are you ready?” initiative, the University has also created [hazard-specific emergency procedures](#) that detail the appropriate response steps for specific types of major emergencies. In addition, uOttawa has an emergency notification system (ENS) to alert individuals of any emergencies. All uOttawa computers are equipped with Alertus, the ENS software. It can also be downloaded from the [Are you ready? website](#) to install on personal computers and other devices. All individuals who will be working alone must be familiar with these tools before they begin working.

If you are uncertain about what steps to take, always put your health and safety above all other considerations when deciding on actions. And remember that it is important in any emergency situation to contact the appropriate authorities once it safe to do so.

Supervisors are responsible for developing additional workplace-specific emergency procedures, as required. If uncertain, always ensure that your health and safety is above all other considerations. Contact the appropriate authorities when safe to do so.

Evacuations

It is important for workers to follow the proper emergency evacuation procedures when working alone in order to ensure they remain as safe as possible. It is essential to know what to do and what NOT to do during an evacuation:

DO:

- Remain calm
- Close all doors when exiting and take your keys with you
- Turn off electrical and open-flame equipment
- Leave area by nearest and safest exit
- If nearest route is block or unsafe, use an alternate route
- Be wary of dangers along your exit route
- Test doors for heat before opening in situations involving a fire

DON'T

- Use elevators
- Return to the evacuated area until it has been deemed safe by uOttawa authorities
- Use your cell phone unless you're reporting an emergency or it is otherwise absolutely necessary in order to decrease the demand on cellular networks

Notification of authorities

Once you're at a safe location, it is essential to contact the appropriate authorities needed to assist with the emergency. For all on-campus emergencies, contact Protection Services, which can be reached at one of the numbers below:

- Emergency situations: **613-562-5411** (or **ext. 5411** from an internal University phone)
- Non-urgent situations: 613-562-5499 (or extension 5499 from an internal University phone)

There are also approximately 140 [emergency phones](#) on campus that will automatically connect to Protection Services. These phones are identified with a blue light. When the connect button is activated the caller is immediately connected to Protection Services and the blue light flashes, alerting others in the immediate area of the emergency. Panic (emergency) buttons are also strategically placed throughout campus (in laboratories, isolated washrooms, etc.).

You can also go to Protection Services in person:

- Main campus: 141 Louis Pasteur (available 24/7)
- Roger Guindon Campus: Room 2013 (available 24/7)
- 200 Lees Campus, Room C146 (available 24/7)

For emergency situations off campus, dial 911. Once it is safe to do so, also report the situation to Protection Services.

Before work in isolation begins

The person who is scheduled to work in isolation must first obtain approval from their supervisor. A risk assessment must be conducted by the supervisor to assess any potential hazards that the worker may be exposed to while working in isolation. Each working alone request is unique; the person proposing to work in isolation must obtain approval from their supervisor in advance of each isolated work activity. The supervisor must take all reasonable and appropriate actions to ensure the worker's health and safety.

Before isolated work begins, the risk assessment conclusion(s) must be considered. This includes questions such as:

- Is there a safe entrance and exit point for the worker outside of regular University business hours?
- Are hazardous chemicals, processes or situations present in the workplace?
- Are there devices or pieces of machinery that one person cannot safely operate alone?

If a worker has a previously reported medical condition that may affect their ability to work alone, the supervisor should seek advice from staff at the Health, Wellness and Leave Sector, who can assess the situation professionally and confidentially.

NOTE: The supervisor is not obligated to approve a request for working in isolation.

During isolated work

Depending on the results of the risk assessment, the extent of monitoring, check-ins or supervision should be adjusted appropriately. If there are more inherent risks involved in the isolated work or with a specific aspect of the work, more supervision is recommended (use of a buddy system, direct supervision, more frequent check-ins, limiting use of certain equipment or materials, etc.). Both the supervisor and the worker must be properly trained in the procedures for monitoring and check-ins.

When working on campus after hours, including at 200 Lees, Roger Guindon and other campus sites, the worker should carry their uOttawa identification (i.e., employee or student card) and report their work location and the anticipated duration to Protection Services.

The worker should also be monitored to ensure their safety. This can include:

- Periodically visiting or checking in on the worker
- Regularly communicating with the worker via phone, email, etc.

Following completion of isolated work

After the isolated work is completed, the worker and supervisor should carry out a debrief during which both parties discuss any issues that may have arisen. During the debrief, the worker and supervisor should also:

- Review the risk assessment done prior to the isolated work to determine if any changes are needed
- Go over the check-in form (if applicable) and investigate any suspicious or troublesome events (e.g., no check-in for an extended period, missed check-in)
- Review and investigate any reported events (accident, incident, near miss, etc.)
- Take reasonable corrective actions
- Record key findings or conclusions

It is recommended that relevant documentation, including risk assessments, check-in logs, etc., be maintained by the supervisor.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

It is important to recognize that workplace violence can occur in any workplace setting. All members of the uOttawa community must understand what workplace violence entails and how to prevent it. This is particularly important in the case of individuals working in isolation because their working conditions can increase their risk of workplace violence compared with individuals working in group settings. Jobs involving lab work, security patrols, the use of point-of-sale terminals and teaching are other examples of positions where individuals are at higher risk. In addition, because the University of Ottawa is located in a downtown urban area, additional security measures should be implemented to ensure the safety of individuals working alone on campus.

What is workplace violence?

The Occupational Health and Safety Act defines workplace violence as:

- a. The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
- b. An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker or
- c. A statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

Violence can take many forms, including:

- Robbery or assault
- Theft
- Aggression or hostility
- Sexual harassment

Indicators of workplace violence

It is important to be aware of signs or cues in the workplace that could be indicators of the potential for violent behaviour. Key warning signs include a sudden change in the way an individual behaves and concerning behaviours such as:

- Tension of the body, clenched fists and jaw
- Changes in voice (volume, speed, tone)
- Restless movements, pacing around
- Abusive and offensive language
- Violating personal space of others
- Shaking, shortened breathing
- Absenteeism, disengagement or avoidance
- Anxiety or emotional distress
- History of violence and substance abuse

How to avoid violent encounters

All workers and supervisors, and particularly those who may work in isolation, should be aware of how to minimize the risks of encountering violent situations.

Tips for workers

- Complete the [violence prevention training](#).
- Remain calm and try not to engage with an individual demonstrating aggressive behaviour.
- If possible, remove yourself from the situation.
- Stay in contact with another team member or a family member or friend and advise them of what you're doing and where you're located (if not possible or no other staff members are on site, check in with Protection Services).
- Avoid restricted and enclosed spaces and areas with low lighting, especially in unfamiliar locations.
- Follow established work protocols and ask for assistance if in doubt.
- Avoid displaying valuables (expensive apparel, electronics, etc.) and refrain from bringing valuable items to the workplace.
- Make use of the communication tools available (emergency phones, emergency or panic buttons, walkie-talkies, etc.).

Tips for supervisors

- Document visitors to the workplace using a sign-in/sign-out procedure.
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of violence prevention resources (Protection Services, [violence prevention training](#), etc.).
- Promote a culture where staff are encouraged to report incidents or concerns of workplace violence.
- Conduct regular check-ins with off-site staff and provide immediate assistance when necessary.
- Implement and maintain on-site emergency and security measures (key or access card for entry, etc.).

- In the event of an incident of workplace violence, conduct follow-ups and provide additional assistance following the investigation.

Additional resources

For additional information on workplace violence and the resource available:

Protection Services 141 Louis-Pasteur 613-562-5411 (emergencies) 613-562-5499 (non-urgent) protect@uOttawa.ca	Office of Risk Management 840-1 Nicholas 613-562-5892 safety@uOttawa.ca	Human Resources Tabaret Hall 550 Cumberland (019) 613-562-5832 infohr@uOttawa.ca	Human Rights Office 121-1 Stewart 613-562-2222 respect@uOttawa.ca
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If you or someone you know is experiencing workplace violence, report the situation immediately to **Protection Services (ext. 5411) or call 911**. Complete an [Accident, Incident, Occupational Disease or Near Miss Form](#) once it is possible to do so.

You can also refer to on the University's [Policy 66, Violence Prevention](#), and complete the [violence prevention training](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check-in

When working alone is unavoidable and the work presents inherent hazards, it is strongly recommended that a check-in procedure be implemented. The most common examples of situations at uOttawa where a check-in procedure should be implemented are:

- Working in isolation in a laboratory environment (e.g., on a weekend when nobody else is present)
- Working in an isolated area on campus
- Working in an isolated area off campus (e.g., group field work)

The procedure involves an individual performing work in isolation communicating (checking in) with a second individual to confirm they are not in danger. Failure of an individual working in isolation to check in would trigger the second individual to take a predetermined action.

The interval at which workers should check in varies depending on the hazards and risk level associated with the work. For example:

- In a situation where there is an elevated risk due to the use of hazardous chemicals, workers may be required to check in at least once an hour.
- In a situation where there is minimal risk, such as in an office area requiring a key card for access, workers may need to check in only at the beginning and end of their shift.

Supervisors should consider the results of the risk assessment when determining the check-in frequency for each job task.

The University recommends the use of a check-in form to record all pertinent details at the beginning of the shift and during all check-ins. Details should include:

- Direct phone numbers of all parties
- The expected shift start and end times of the person working in isolation
- Work tasks to be performed
- Location of work being performed
- Travel means (if applicable)
- Potential hazards
- Designated check-in times
- Action to be taken if worker in isolation misses check-in
- Alternate plans

The individual working in isolation can check in with the worker at a safe location either by phone or in person. The method chosen depends on the type, time and location of work. If check-in times have been scheduled and the worker at a safe location does not hear from the individual working in isolation, the worker in the safe location must immediately try to establish contact with the individual working in isolation (by phone or in person).

If the individual working in isolation fails to respond, the worker in the safe location or a supervisor must attempt a second call within five minutes. If the individual working in isolation fails to respond to the second attempt, the appointed worker or supervisor must escalate the call and, if necessary, contact appropriate emergency personnel (Protection Services if work location is on campus and civic authorities if work location is off campus).

For work occurring off campus, smartphone applications or check-in services from external organizations can be used.

See Appendix 1 for a sample check-in form or use the [SecurUO WorkAlone](#).

Inspection checklist

While no checklist can be fully complete, users are encouraged to follow an inspection checklist as an initial reference point for workers in isolation and their supervisors. The checklist encourages the worker working in isolation to investigate their surroundings and ensure that they are comfortable performing their work tasks.

A checklist can be completed at the beginning of the shift in conjunction with the risk assessment matrix, prior to a worker beginning their duties in isolation. If the checklist identifies an issue or an added hazard is identified, the worker is recommended to consult with his/her supervisor prior to working in isolation to determine reasonable actions. The checklist is not limited to the content listed; supervisors are encouraged to expand and/or modify the checklist to fit the unique needs of the end users.

An [example checklist for laboratories and offices](#) is available from the Office of Risk Management.

Hazard identification and risk assessment form

A hazard identified and risk assessment form is included (Appendix 2) to assist a supervisor identifying hazards and establishing a level of risk, including the likelihood and severity of harm that is associated with tasks being performed. A low risk rating does not mean that workers can become complacent or that check-ins are not required; it is simply intended to help the supervisor define the risk and control measures required for the work being performed.

Incident report

Any accident, incident, exposure, spill or near miss must be reported using the uOttawa [Accident, Incident, Occupational Disease or Near Miss Form](#). The form is available online and must be completed at the earliest opportunity. A worker, student or supervisor may complete the form; additional information may be requested from uOttawa following submission of the form. If a computer is not available to complete the form, a hard copy of the form is included as Appendix 3.

APPENDIX 1 – SAMPLE CHECK-IN FORM



Worker Check-In Form

Worker in isolation

Name: _____

Work location: _____

Phone number at location: _____

Cell number: _____

Shift start: _____

Shift end: _____

Supervisor

Name: _____

Phone number at location: _____

Cell number: _____

Worker at safe location (if other than supervisor)

Name: _____

Phone number at location: _____

Cell number: _____

Check-in table

The University recommends that supervisors of workers who are working alone maintain a separate form for each working-alone activity.

Scheduled check-in time	Actual check-in time	Notes

Alternate/emergency plans

APPENDIX 2 – HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Working in isolation – Hazard identification and risk assessment

Task:

Principle work location:

Expected start time:

Expected end time:

Process

1. Identify hazards associated with the expected work in isolation:
 - a. Consider all aspects of the task and working-alone criteria, including:
 - i. **Length of time the worker will be working alone**
 1. Is it reasonable for the task to be conducted alone?
 2. Can the worker do the work safely alone?
 3. Is the work being done outside regular University business hours (i.e., before 8:45 a.m. or after 5 p.m. from September to May or after 4 p.m. from June to August), on a statutory holiday or during a period in which the building is locked, etc.)?
 - ii. **Communication methods**
 1. What forms of communication with the worker are available?
 2. Is it necessary to establish visual contact with the worker or is voice communication sufficient?
 3. Will emergency communication systems (landline phones, cell phones, panic buttons, etc.) function correctly in work circumstances considered “normal”?
 - iii. **Location of work**
 1. Is the work being done in an isolated workplace or location?
 2. Is transportation necessary to get to the work location (i.e., located off a uOttawa campus)?
 3. Are personnel and first responders able to access the area?
 4. Does the work involve interaction with others or handling money or valuables?
 5. Is the work environment equipped with emergency equipment and supplies (spill kit, first aid kit, emergency eyewash station, emergency shower, etc.)?
 6. Has an emergency plan been established for reasonably foreseeable emergency situations that may arise?

iv. Type of work

1. What machinery, tools or equipment will be used?
2. Is fatigue likely to be a factor?
3. Is complacency likely to be a factor?

v. Characteristics of the individual working alone

1. Does the worker have a pre-existing medical condition or mobility deficiency that would increase the level of risk?
2. Does the worker have an adequate level of experience and training?
- b. Consider previous incidents/accidents at similar locations (other uOttawa workplaces, other universities, research institutes, etc.) by reviewing reports, audits and lessons learned .
- c. Obtain input from workers about their particular work and work activities.
- d. Talk to supervisors at similar workplaces (on campus, in industry, etc.).
- e. Identify high-risk activities (working at heights, with electricity, with the public, etc.) and high-hazard situations (involving chemicals, machinery, heights, etc.) and restrict these activities.
2. Assign the likelihood and severity of each hazard (refer to page 3 for assistance).
3. Prioritize the list of hazards requiring more immediate attention.
4. Determine how the hazards can be eliminated or mitigated.
5. Implement hazard control measures and communicate control measures to workers.
6. Verify effectiveness of control measures.

Example

Task	Potential hazard	Work location	Likelihood of exposure Rare Unlikely Possible Likely Almost certain	Consequence of exposure Insignificant Minor Moderate Major Catastrophic	Risk rating (likelihood x consequence)	Control measure(s)
Office work after-hours	Workplace violence	CBY E03	Rare	Major	Medium	1. Violence prevention training 2. Worker check-in via email at beginning and end of work

Add rows to the table as applicable.

Risk Rating Matrix
 – Low Risk, Medium Risk, High Risk, Extreme Risk –

		Consequence				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Almost certain	High	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
	Rare	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High

Likelihood of exposure to hazard

- **Almost certain:** Expected to occur *often* during entire project
- **Likely:** Will probably occur *several times* during entire project
- **Possible:** Reasonably expected to occur *at some time* during entire project
- **Unlikely:** Not expected to occur during entire project but *possible*
- **Rare:** *Not expected* to occur at all during entire project

Consequence of exposure to hazard

- **Catastrophic:** Results in death, total loss or shutdown of system, significant release into the environment affecting the public or regulatory intervention
- **Major:** Results in permanent impairment, serious lost-time injury, loss or shutdown of part of system, large on-site release into environment
- **Moderate:** Short-term lost-time injury, short-term interruption in use of system, recoverable release into environment
- **Minor:** Minor injury, minor damage to system, minor confined release into the environment
- **Insignificant:** Very minor injury, with consequence less serious than for **Minor**

APPENDIX 3 – ACCIDENT, INCIDENT OR OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS FORM

Whenever possible, please use the online [Accident, Incident, Occupational Disease or Near Miss Form](#).