

Normal weekday office hours at Carleton University are between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding any weekday when the university is officially closed). After hours include the times between 4:30 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. weekdays, Saturday, Sunday and any other day the university is officially closed.

Despite the above, there is an understanding that in many situations, particularly in research and teaching activities, that there may be a requirement to work after hours. For example, some faculty and staff members may have extended hours. In addition, some staff and graduate students choose or are scheduled to work after regular business hours for a variety of reasons.

Buildings have been made secure in accordance with University standards, and most offices are equipped with a readily available direct telephone line to the Department of University Safety in case of emergency. Those individuals who work after hours must comply with the Working Alone Guidelines.

While this procedure applies to activities conducted on the Carleton University campus, the same principles apply when off campus activities are undertaken. In those situations, additional risk assessment strategies may be found in the [Risk Management Manual](#).

Working Alone inherently increases the risk of certain workplace activities as a result of being isolated, unsupervised and because help is not readily available in the case of an emergency. The overall risk will also depend on the activity being undertaken.

Therefore, Carleton University requires that hazards associated to the activity be assessed and control measures put in place to mitigate the risks before any activity is undertaken by a lone worker.

Note: Undergraduate students are prohibited from working alone in high risk activities. Adequate supervision is required.

1.0 DEFINITIONS

Note: while the definitions below use the term “worker” or “employee” the situation applies to any individual (includes students and volunteers)

Activity means a set of work tasks, situation, condition, or process that is conducted by a worker.

Buddy system A system of organizing employees into work groups so that each employee of the work group is designated to be observed by at least one other employee in the work group

Check in procedure An established procedure of communication between a worker and a designated individual with the goal of accounting for the lone worker

Critical injury An injury of a serious nature that places life in jeopardy, produces unconsciousness, results in substantial loss of blood, involves fractures or amputations, burns to major portions of the body or loss of sight

Effective Means of Communication A radio, telephone, or other electronic communication device.

Hazard A situation, condition, process, material or thing that may cause an injury or illness to a worker.

Hazard Assessment A procedure, which helps integrate required Occupational Health & Safety principles and practices into a particular work task. Each basic step of the task is examined to identify potential hazards and required control measures to determine the safest way to do the work.

Safety plan A documented plan of safe work procedures with a goal to prevent accidents and to minimize risk.

Supervisor An individual that directs or oversees a person, group, department, organization, or operation for Carleton University. This includes a faculty member supervising the activities of staff and/or students.

Worker Employees, students, and persons in an unpaid status who are performing authorized work under the supervision of a University employee.

Working Alone Activities where a worker is not directly supervised and in the event of injury, illness or emergency, immediate assistance is not readily available.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisor

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to:

- Comply with the CU Working Alone Guidelines
- Identify risks or hazards associated with the work to be performed or the environment where the work is to be done.
- Conduct a hazard assessment and complete a [Working Alone Safety Plan](#) for higher risk activities
- Communicate the results of the hazard assessment to all participants
- Provide written safe work procedures for staff and or students working alone, in order to eliminate or minimize identified risks.
- Ensure effective methods of communication are available to workers who require emergency assistance (e.g. cell phones, radio).
- Establish a check in procedure, periodic site visit, and/or a final check in after the completion of specific tasks depending on the recommendation from the hazard assessment.
- Document when working alone is permitted and or prohibited and ensure this is effectively communicated to all workers.
- Schedule potentially hazardous work for times when supervisors and appropriate help will be available.
- The OHSA places the primary responsibility on supervisors for ensuring the wellbeing of workers (faculty, staff, students and volunteers) under their supervision. Therefore, the supervisor in

consultation with the worker determines the risk level of the work and the frequency and method of verifying the health and safety status of the worker when working alone. The supervisor must make every reasonable effort to ensure compliance by the worker.

Worker

It is the responsibility of the worker to:

- Obtain permission from the supervisor prior to working alone
- Participate in the working alone hazard assessment and the completion of the [Working Alone Safety Plan](#)
- Follow practices outlined in the safety plan
- Maintain regular communication as directed by supervisors.
- Report all situations, incidents or 'near misses'

3.0 HAZARD ASSESSMENT

A hazard assessment is required to accurately determine the risk level associated with the working alone activity. The hazard identification and control measures must be documented in the [Working Alone Safety Plan](#) and completed by the supervisor in collaboration with the participant of the working alone activity. The Environmental Health and Safety office is available to provide assistance in determining the hazard level for working alone activities. The office can be reached by email at ehs@carleton.ca or by telephone at ext. 3000.

Examples of hazards to assist with the hazard assessment (*Please note: These are not all-inclusive*)

Hazards	Control Measures
Laboratory Material (e.g. Chemicals, biohazards, radioactive material, flammable material, animals, sharps, UV light, lasers, X-Rays, compressed gases, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff must be trained in standard laboratory procedures and are assessed as competent in the activity • Only persons familiar with lab protocols and standard operating procedures are authorized to work alone • Staff must have access to a means of communication • Personal protective equipment is provided and appropriate use is ensured • All staff know the location of first aid kits, spill kit and supplies, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, emergency showers/eye wash stations and telephones • Ensure the Material Safety Data Sheet has been consulted (http://carleton.ca/ehs/programs/working-lab/laboratory-health-and-safety/msds-sheets/)

Use of electrical equipment/power tools, working in and around rotating equipment, ladders, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are trained and assessed as competent in the activity • Only approved and properly maintained tools and equipment are used • Staff must have a means of communication • Lock out/tag out procedures are used. • Staff is familiar with emergency response (e.g. location of emergency equipment, emergency stop, contact information, etc.)
Unauthorized personnel accessing work areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doors are closed and locked after regular hours • If a person is acting suspiciously, Department of University Safety (ext 4444) is called • Any persons accessing work areas without prior approval of the supervisor will be denied entry
Violent persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doors are closed and locked after regular hours • Be familiar with the CU Violence and Harassment prevention policies and programs • If a person is acting suspiciously, Department of University Safety (ext 4444) is called

4.0 CLASSIFICATION FOR HAZARD LEVEL

Low Risk

There is minimal hazard with respect to the activity and the work environment.

Examples include, but are not limited to, general office work, computer work, writing reports.

In the case of a Low Risk activity, there is no requirement to complete the [Working Alone Safety Plan](#). There remains however a need to ensure that all individuals who will be working alone are familiar with basic emergency procedures, and have completed Worker H&S Awareness training.

Medium Risk

Some minor hazard(s) exist in the activity and/or the work environment, but the risk is decreased by the control measures in place.

Examples include, but are not limited to janitorial, maintenance or similar work with hazardous materials and laboratory work with minimal risk.

In the case of a Medium Risk activity, there is an expectation that the [Working Alone Safety Plan](#) will be completed by the Supervisor/Principal Investigator, insofar as ensuring the appropriate mitigation and control measures are in place and effective. The [Working Alone Safety Plan](#) is to be maintained by the Principal Investigator or Supervisor/Manager.

There is a need to ensure that all individuals who will be working alone are familiar with basic emergency procedures, and have completed Worker H&S Awareness training.

High Risk

There is considerable hazard in the activity and/or the work environment, but the risk is minimized by multiple effective control measures.

Examples include, but are not limited to, working at heights, with electricity, with hand tools, with hazardous substances or materials, with materials at high pressure, or where there exists a potential for violence.

Undergraduate students shall not undertake high risk activities while alone. They must always be supervised accordingly.

In the case of a High Risk activity, the [Working Alone Safety Plan](#) will be completed by the Supervisor/Principal Investigator/Manager, with particular attention to the Hazard Assessment and Control section as well as the Emergency Response Plan section. The [Working Alone Safety Plan](#) is to be reviewed by the EHS Office.

There is a critical need to ensure that all individuals who will be working alone are familiar with basic emergency procedures, as well as the specific emergency procedures identified within the Plan, and have completed all required H&S training, including Worker H&S Awareness training.

Prohibited Activities

There is considerable hazard in the activity and/or the work environment, and the risk is not minimized by multiple control measures.

Working alone is prohibited when the activity involves the following.

- Confined space entry
- An installation, equipment, or conductor operating at a nominal voltage of 300 volts or more, except while testing equipment or troubleshooting.
- Electrical transmission systems rated at more than 750 volts.
- Trenches(deeper than 1 meter)
- A portable ladder that exceeds 6 metres in length and is not securely fastened or work with a ladder that is likely to be endangered by traffic
- The use of fall arrest equipment and movable scaffolding above 4m (or three sections)
- Quick-acting acutely toxic material as described by the Material Safety Data Sheet
- Air, light, heat, mechanical shock (when struck, vibrated or otherwise agitated), and water reactive material as described by the Material Safety Data Sheet

- Use of supplied air respiratory equipment or self-contained breathing apparatus is required
- Risk of drowning or suffocating
- Use of a crane or similar equipment
- Welding operations
- Machines and power tools that can cause critical injury (e.g., lathes, table saws, chain saws)
- Handling of animals capable of causing critical injury or paralysis and/or life threatening zoonotic disease.
- **Tasks, which, based on the risk assessment conducted by the supervisor in consultation with the employee and EHS, are deemed to require more than one person.**

Given the nature of the “prohibited activities”, working alone is not allowed. That being said, they can be safely completed by more than one worker. Completing the “[Working Alone Safety Plan](#)” remains critical as it becomes a “High Hazard Activity Safety Plan. This ensures that all aspects of emergency planning have been attended to for the hazard in question, and ensures that all persons engaged in the activity are prepared should an emergency occur. A copy of the plan is to be provided to EHS for review and approval.

5.0 COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

An effective means of communication must be available to persons working alone. This may consist of:

- a. Landline or cellular phone communication; or
- b. Radio communication; or
- c. Some other effective means of electronic communication.

6.0 CHECK-IN PROCEDURE

It is important to account for individuals who are working alone. Medium and high risk working alone activities will require that a check-in procedure be established. The following are factors to consider when developing a check in procedure:

1. Determine who will be the main contact person and a backup individual. Ensure the designated contact person is willing to participate and knows the procedure if they are unable to contact you.
2. Determine if a verbal check-in is adequate or must the employee be accounted for by a visual check.
3. Define under what circumstances the lone employee will check in and how often. The frequency of the communication increases as the risk of the activity increases. The schedule must be determined and clearly communicated to the lone worker and to the contact person.
4. Have the lone worker call the designated contact individual at the beginning and completion of the activity.
5. Have the contact person call or visit the lone employee periodically to make sure everything is OK. You may wish to have a written log of contact.
6. Develop an emergency action plan to be followed if contact with the lone worker is not achieved within a certain timeframe. For example, if the worker cannot be reached or does not respond

within 15 minutes, the designated contact person will arrange for face to face contact to be made with the employee by either driving to the University or by calling the Department of University Safety to have a patrol officer immediately investigate your worksite.

7. Pick out a code word to be used to identify or confirm that help is needed.

Alternately, the Department of University Safety provides a service whereby they patrol or call the worksite of lone workers. However, in the event of an emergency on campus, officers may not be able to continue with the checks. <http://carleton.ca/safety/protect-yourself/working-after-hours-program/>. To take advantage of this DUS service, the lone worker must register with the Department of University Safety each time they work alone.

1. Provide your name, exact location and telephone number where you can be reached.
2. Inform the DUS of your estimated time of departure. Ensure any changes to the agreed upon arrangements are communicated. (e.g. if you leave early or leave to work in a different location)
3. DUS will patrol the worksite or contact you during the work period.
4. If DUS is not able to contact you, follow up procedures will be initiated, including immediate investigation of your worksite.

7.0 ACTIVITY COMPLETION

The person working alone shall inform the responsible person or DUS (where applicable) when they have completed the activity and they are leaving campus. It is recommended that the person call Foot Patrol or the Department of University Safety before accessing transportation home or parking lots alone and after hours.