

Faculty of Science

WORKING ALONE OR IN ISOLATION PROTOCOL

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Preamble

The nature of the work and research being done in the Faculty of Science is such that at times there is a need for personnel (administrators, faculty, laboratory faculty, work study students, students, and graduate students) to work outside of regular hours. Staff are not required to work outside regular hours but may, on occasion, choose to do so.

The Science building is equipped with phones in all offices, laboratories and emergency phones in hallways that connect directly to campus security in case of an emergency. Those choosing to work beyond regular hours or having scheduled classes during the evening are expected to have personal contacts who know how to contact them should they not show up within a reasonable time frame. They are expected to practice the following personal safety practices:

- contact security upon arrival and when leaving (when working on weekends)
- be familiar with TRU Emergency procedures
- have TRU picture ID on your person
- keep doors closed and locked
- keep areas well lit
- report any suspicious or unusual behavior to campus security
- do not give access to the building to strangers
- utilize the “Safewalk” program to access your vehicle, if appropriate
- ensure friends or family are aware of your itinerary
- have a cell phone available whenever possible

WorkSafe BC has legislated the following specific guidelines for those who are required to work alone or in isolation.

http://www.worksafebc.com/regulation_and_policy/public_hearings/assets/pdf/2007_ph_approved/Part%204_strikesthrough.pdf

WORKING ALONE PROTOCOL

4.20.1 Definition

In sections 4.20.2 to 4.23, “to work alone or in isolation” means to work in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker:

- (a) in case of an emergency, or
- (b) in case the worker is injured or in ill health

4.20.2 Hazard identification, elimination and control

- (1) Before a worker is assigned to work alone or in isolation, the employer must identify any hazards to that worker.
- (2) Before a worker starts a work assignment with a hazard identified under subsection (1), the employer must take measures:
 - (a) to eliminate the hazard, and
 - (b) if it is not practicable to eliminate the hazard, to minimize the risk from the hazard.
- (3) For purposes of subsection (2) (b), the employer must minimize the risk from the hazard to the lowest level practicable using engineering controls, administrative controls or a combination of engineering and administrative controls.

4.21. Procedures for checking well- being of worker

- (1) The employer must develop and implement a written procedure for checking the well-being of a worker assigned to work alone or in isolation under conditions which present a risk of disabling injury, if the worker might not be able to secure assistance in the event of injury or other misfortune.
- (2) The procedure for checking a worker's well-being must include the time interval between checks and the procedure to follow in case the worker cannot be contacted, including provisions for emergency rescue.
- (3) A person must be designated to establish contact with the worker at predetermined intervals and the results must be recorded by the person.
- (4) In addition to checks at regular intervals, a check at the end of the work shift must be done.
- (5) The procedure for checking a worker's well-being, including time intervals between the checks, must be developed in consultation with the joint committee or worker health and safety representative, as applicable.
- (6) Time intervals for checking a worker's well-being must be developed in consultation with the worker assigned to work alone or in isolation.

4.22. Training

A worker required to work in the circumstances described in section 4.21 (1) and any person assigned to check on the worker must be trained in the written procedure for checking the worker's well-being.

In order to be in compliance with the above legislation and for the health and safety of all who work in the Faculty of Science the following procedures are required for anyone who is working alone or in isolation. **TRU employees are covered by WorkSafe while students are not.** However, students are required to comply with the same regulations as workers.

Definitions of Terms Used in the Guidelines

Supervisor: a person who instructs, directs and controls workers in the performance of their duties

Worker: a) a person who has entered into or works under a contract of service
(b) a person who is a learner, although not under a contract of service or apprenticeship, who becomes subject to the hazards of an industry

Administrative Controls: the provision, use and scheduling of work activities and resources in the workplace, including planning, organizing, staffing and coordinating, for the purpose of controlling risk (rearrange work so more than one person is around, designating certain high risk activities as prohibited when working alone)

Engineering Controls: the physical arrangement, design or alteration of workstations, equipment, materials, production facilities or other aspects of the physical work environment, for the purpose of controlling risk (fumehoods, biological safety cabinets etc)

Hazard: a thing or condition that may expose a person to a risk of injury or occupational disease

Risk: the probability of injury or occupational disease occurring when exposed to a hazard

Worksite: location where a worker/student is or likely to be engaged

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment (lab coats, goggles, face shields, gloves, etc)

Roles and Responsibilities

Supervisors:

- (a) Identify those who are required to work alone or in isolation.
- (b) Together with other workers/students identify the hazards from the nature of the work and assess the risk (see example). Perform task-oriented risk assessment and communicate results to all affected workers including others conducting similar work.
- (c) Eliminate hazards if possible.
- (d) If unable to eliminate hazards, minimize the risk by:
 - (i) providing written instructions as to the scope of work that can be done while alone or in isolation;
 - (ii) ensure adequate training and instruction for safe work practices (maintain records);
 - (iii) ensure adequate level of competence for work that will be done;
 - (iv) ensure knowledge of and training in proper use of PPE (maintain records);
 - (v) develop a written procedure for checking in on the worker/student (the frequency of checks will be determined by the risk of the work being done);
 - (vi) ensure emergency and survival supplies for working in remote outdoor worksites;

Persons:

- (a) Take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of all persons who may be affected anyone's acts or omissions at work.
- (b) Carry out his or her work in accordance with established safe work procedures and working alone guidelines.
- (c) Use and/or wear protective equipment, devices and clothing as required by the regulations and SOPs.
- (d) Not engage in conduct that may endanger any person.
- (e) Ensure that the person's ability to work without risk to his or her health or safety, is not impaired by alcohol, drugs or other causes.
- (f) Demonstrate an understanding of TRU emergency procedures.
- (g) Participate in the risk assessment of the work being done.
- (h) Report to the supervisor or employer:
 - (i) the absence of or defect in any protective equipment, device or clothing, or the existence of any other hazard, that the worker considers is likely to endanger the worker or any other person;
 - (ii) any accidents or incidents that occurred while performing work alone.

Departments

- (a) Ensure SOPs are developed and readily available for the safe operation of all equipment or tasks being performed in their areas. Such SOPs should be dated, signed, and reviewed and updated as required (see example).
- (b) Ensure SOPs are read, understood and followed by all persons working in an area.
- (c) Ensure appropriate PPE is available and operating effectively.
- (d) Develop and post personal safety information sheets for all areas where workers may be working alone (see example).
- (e) Define areas/tasks where working alone is not allowed and communicate to all department members.

Documentation:

Records to be kept by the Faculty of Science Administrative Coordinator:

- (a) names of those students (including the name of their supervisor) who will be working alone;
- (b) faculty who will be working alone
- (c) Completed risk assessment and safe work plan forms (if required) for those identified in (a) will be kept in the Administrative Coordinators office.
- (d) Completed risk assessment and safe work plans for (b) will be kept on personnel files in the Science office
- (e) records of worker training and/or orientation must be maintained

The Working Alone Procedures shall be reviewed annually and updated as required by the Faculty of Science Safety Committee.

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM FOR WORKERS WORKING ALONE OR IN ISOLATION

Detailed information is available on TRU OH&S page at the following:

<http://www.tru.ca/hsafety/riskmanagementandinspections.html#How%20do%20I%20assess%20the%20risk>

1. Supervisor: _____

2. Name of employee working alone: _____

3. Description of work assigned where a worker may be working alone or in isolation where there is a risk of injury and no immediate assistance in the event of such an injury or accident:

4. Location of work

5. Hazards associated with the risk (check all applicable)

Laboratory hazards _____

(hazardous chemicals, biohazardous materials, sharps, flammable materials, Bunsen burners, UV light, lasers etc)

Fall _____ Extreme temperatures _____ Physical Assault _____

Electrical _____ Moving Object _____ Power Tools _____

Working at heights _____ Animal Hazard _____

Remoteness _____

Others _____

6. Do the risks associated with the hazards identified in #5 change dependent on the time of day the task is being completed? Please explain

7. Assess the risk

Step One

What are the consequences of this incident occurring? Consider what could reasonably happen. Look at the descriptions and choose the one most suitable.

_____	Consequence	Description
_____	Major	Death or extensive injuries
_____	Moderate	Medical treatment
_____	Minor	First aid treatment
_____	Insignificant	No treatment

Step 2

What is the likelihood of the consequence identified in Step 1 happening? Consider this without new or interim controls in place. Look at the descriptions and choose the one most suitable.

Likelihood	Description
A _____	Is expected to occur
B _____	Could probably occur
C _____	Could occur, but only rarely
D _____	May occur, but probably never

Take Step 1 rating and select the correct column.

Take Step 2 rating and select the correct line.

Circle the risk score where the two ratings cross on the matrix below

E = Extreme, H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = Negligible

		CONSEQUENCES			
		Maj	Mod	Min	Ins
LIKELIHOOD	A	E	E	H	M
	B	E	H	M	M
	C	H	M	M	L
	D	M	M	L	N

8. If risk is extreme absolutely no working alone
9. It is strongly advisable that the person should not work alone, however the final judgment on the person's abilities is left with the supervisor".
10. If the risk is medium or low, the person may work alone, ensuring actions to minimize the hazard are in place and the safe work plan is in place.
11. Office or computer work would have a risk of N and as such would not require a safe work plan. Persons would be expected to practice the personal safety practices as outlined in the preamble.
12. Actions to minimize the risk:

Activity	Hazard	Actions to minimize hazard
1.		
2.		
3.		

Example:

Activity	Hazard	Actions to minimize hazard
Preparing media, mixing chemicals, planting bacteria	Laboratory :chemicals, biohazards, sharps, using autoclave	PPE: fumehood, biological safety hood Lab coats, goggles are provided and properly used Proper sharps containers supplied Posted SOPs for procedures Spill equipment available Safety showers, eyewash available Safety training in spills, WHMIS Demonstrated competency in assigned work Check in at beginning and end of activity
Retrieving eggs from nest in tree 4 meters from the ground	fall	Wear helmet Work only with person on the ground Use harness and rope if over 3 meters above ground
Field research at Well's Gray	Encounter wildlife Isolated Potentially getting lost	Complete bear aware activity on line Check in every hour (radio, cell phone etc) Extreme weather survival gear Special footwear and clothing Check weather conditions before leaving

Safe Work Plan

1. This safe work plan form must be filled out ahead of the project by:
 - supervisors planning any projects involving students where they may be working alone;
 - supervisors of work-study students;
 - employees, in consultation with their supervisor, who are required to work alone on weekends or holidays.
2. The plan must be accompanied by a completed Risk Assessment Form.

Completed forms are to be submitted to the Executive Coordinator before permission and keys are given to students:

- 1) Supervisor _____
- 2) Name of worker/student _____
- 3) Area where working alone will be done _____
- 4) Reasons for requirement to work alone

- 5) Documentation of training: (specific to the area, safety orientation session, proper use of PPE)

- 6) Has the person demonstrated competence to work alone? Yes No
- 7) Communication plan that has been established while working alone that has been agreed to by both parties:
 - a. How is the communication to occur
 - b. Frequency of contact
 - c. Plan if contact is missed

I agree to abide by the established procedures enabling me to work alone under the situation described in the attached risk assessment in the TRU Faculty of Science

Signed _____ (individual working alone)

Dated: _____