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**RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING AND ADDRESSING WORKING ALONE RISK**

**PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of these Guidelines is to support the UOIT Health and Safety Policy and the Working Alone Procedures by providing guidance on determining the Risk Level for any work performed and/or the Workplace environment when developing a Safety Plan to address a potential Working Alone situation.

**DEFINITIONS**

1. For the purpose of these Guidelines the following definitions apply:

**“Buddy System”** means a plan of organizing and designating Employees such that each Employee is observed by at least one other Employee. The Buddy System must include periodic checking of the other designated Employee’s safety.

**“Competent Person”** is defined by the OHSA, and any amendments thereto, and means a person who is:

1. qualified because of knowledge, training and experience to organize the work and its performance
2. is familiar with the OHSA and the regulations that apply to the work, and
3. has knowledge of any potential or actual danger to health or safety in the workplace

**“Employee”** means a worker, as defined under the OHSA, who is employed at the University (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01#BK0>).

**”Hazard”** means a situation in the Workplace that poses a level of threat to life, health, property or the environment.

**“Risk Level”** means the classification given to a Hazard. Risk Level classification is in accordance with the Guidelines for Assessing and Addressing Risk, and any amendments thereto.

**“Safety Plan”** means a documented plan of safe work procedures to prevent or minimize the occurrence of Workplace accidents.

**“Student”** means any individual registered as a student, in accordance with the academic regulations of the University.

**“Supervisor”** means any person who has supervisory responsibilities with respect to one or more Employees or has charge of the Workplace.

**“Visitor”** means any person who is not a University Member and who has occasion, for any reason, to be present at any location owned, leased, rented or otherwise utilized by the University.

**“Workplace”** means any location or facility owned, leased, rented or otherwise utilized by the University for the purposes of carrying out University activities, including any off-site location where authorized work is being conducted. This includes, but is not limited to, any locations of business travel and conferences, student placements, field trips, field research, athletic events and University sponsored social events.

**“Working Alone”** means a work situation, condition, activity or Workplace where immediate assistance would not be available to an Employee in the event of injury, health impairment, victimization or other foreseeable serious emergency.

**SCOPE and AUTHORITY**

1. These Guidelines apply to all Working Alone situations
2. The Vice-President, Human Resources and Services is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Procedures.

**GUIDELINES**

1. **General**
   1. In preparing the Safety Plan, all work performed and/or Workplace environments will be assessed as Low, Moderate or High Risk, according to the specific guidelines outlined below and the Risk Assessment matrix attached as Appendix A to these Guidelines.
   2. When there is any question regarding the level of risk associated with a particular activity or Workplace environment, the Supervisor will consult with the Office of Health and Safety (OHS) in order to ensure that the appropriate level of risk is identified and safeguards are put in place to mitigate risks.
2. **Low Risk Activities Exempt from Safety Plans**
   1. Working Alone activities that are considered routine office work and/or administrative tasks are considered low risk and are exempt from the requirement of a Safety Plan.
   2. Individuals performing these tasks must be made aware of all relevant emergency protocols by their Supervisor and follow applicable building entry/exist protocols, where applicable.
   3. Exemption from a Safety Plan will not exempt an Employee and Supervisor from the requirement to comply with all legislation, regulations, and University policies and procedures in the performance of the work.
3. **Low Risk**
   1. A work activity or Workplace environment will be considered low risk if all of the following characteristics pertain:
      * There is minimal Hazard with respect to the work activity and/or Workplace environment;
      * There are no legal, or other stated requirements, for direct supervision of the Work activity and/or Workplace;
      * There are no requirement to follow specific safety protocols related to a designated Hazard;
      * There are no planned interactions with potentially harmful energy sources, materials, chemicals, prescribed substances or the general public;
      * Emergency assistance is easily and readily accessible.
   2. Examples of work in this category would include, but are not limited to, activities such as:
      * Performing activities which present minimal risk of injury or incident;
      * Working in an office, unoccupied classroom, the library, study area or other public areas;
      * Doing general office work in a laboratory where no experimentation is underway that could potentially result in exposure to any associated laboratory Hazards. This includes Biohazard level 1 and 2 laboratories;
      * Entering, with appropriate authority, an area (such as a laboratory) to visually inspect the area with no interaction with equipment.
   3. At minimum, a Safety Plan for a Low Risk activity and/or workplace environment must include information regarding how to access emergency assistance if required.
   4. OHS provides a template Safety Plan for Low Risk Working Alone situations. A copy of this Template can be found on the UOIT H&S website.
4. **Moderate Risk**
   1. A work activity or workplace environment will be considered Moderate Risk if any of the following characteristics pertain:
      * Some Hazards are present in the activity and/or workplace environment, but the associated risk is minimized through limited interaction, low likelihood of critical injury or incident, and the implementation of appropriate control measures;
      * Planned interactions with potentially harmful energy sources, materials, chemicals, or prescribed substances;
      * There are no legal or other stated requirements for direct supervision of the work activity and/or Workplace.
   2. Examples of work in the Moderate Risk category would include, but are not limited to, activities such as:
      * Entering a laboratory to take readings (no physical interaction with equipment and processes except to use reading equipment designed for this purpose);
      * Laboratory work that has some associated risks that have been mitigated as stated above.
   3. The Safety Plan for a work activity and/or workplace environment considered Moderate Risk must include:
      * Detailed control measures and procedures to eliminate or minimize risks;
      * The frequency and method of verifying the health and safety status of the Employee when Working Alone;
      * Information is provided regarding the appropriate safeguards and how to access emergency assistance if required.
   4. Use of the Buddy System is recommended as part of the Safety Plan for Working Alone in a work activity and/or workplace environment deemed to be Moderate Risk.
5. **High Risk**
   1. A work activity or workplace environment will be considered High Risk if any of the following characteristics pertain:
      * There are considerable Hazards present in the activity and/or workplace environment, which require multiple and/or significant control measures to minimize risk;
      * The Employee has direct interface with electrically energized machinery that poses a significant shock Hazard;
      * The Employee has a direct interface with prescribed substances or highly toxic substances that could cause critical injury or incident and/or negatively impact an Employee’s ability to summon help;
      * There is an elevated risk of injury due to the need to move equipment;
      * The work involves chemical energy or stored energy, which could result in injury;
      * The work involves the handling of money or other valuable goods, including copies of exams that have not yet been given.
   2. The Safety Plan for a work activity and/or Workplace environment considered High Risk must include:
      * Detailed control measures and procedures to eliminate or minimize risks;
      * The frequency and method of verifying the health and safety status of the Employee when Working Alone;
      * Information regarding the appropriate safeguards and how to access emergency assistance if required.

**6.3** Use of the Buddy System is recommended as part of the Safety Plan for Working Alone in a work activity and/or Workplace environment deemed to be Moderate Risk.

1. **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**
   1. [Occupational Health and Safety Act, RSO 1990, c O](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm)
   2. Occupational Health and Safety Act, RRO 1990, Reg. 858
   3. Occupational Health and Safety Act, O. Reg. 851
   4. Occupational Health and Safety Act, O. Reg. 213/91
   5. Occupational Health and Safety Act, O. Reg. 67/93
   6. Occupational Health and Safety Act, O. Reg. 632/05
2. **RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS**
   1. UOIT Health and Safety Policy
   2. UOIT Occupational Health and Safety Management System
   3. Working Alone Procedures
   4. Safety Plan Template
   5. UOIT Emergency Guidelines

**APPENDIX A - WORKING ALONE HAZARD ASSESSMENT MATRIX**

**Probability of Risk Happening**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Very Likely** | **Moderate Risk**  **Medium**  2 | **High Risk**  **High**  **3** | **High Risk**  **Extreme**  **5** |
| **Likely** | **Low Risk**  **Low**  **1** | **Moderate Risk**  **Medium**  2 | **High Risk**  **High**  **3** |
| **Unlikely** | **Low Risk**  **Low**  **1** | **Low Risk**  **Low**  **1** | **Moderate Risk**  **Medium**  2 |
| **Minor** | **Moderate** | **Major** |

**Severity if the Risk Happened**