



7.15 WORKING ALONE POLICY

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

Approving Authority:	Board/Senate/President
Original Approval Date:	December 2004
Date of Most Recent Review/Revision:	July 2009
Office of Accountability:	Vice-President: Finance & Administration
Administrative Responsibility:	Safety, Health, Environment, & Risk Management (SHERM)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Wilfrid Laurier University's commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment for our staff, faculty, students and volunteers. Special Constable Service, Health Services Staff, Qualified First Aiders, etc. are readily accessible during normal weekday office hours, but are not readily accessible after hours, on weekends, or in isolated areas of the campus where the working conditions or circumstances may present foreseeable personal safety risks; as a result the following procedures provide guidelines for prudent operational practices. As supervisory "due diligence" is an important aspect of all health and safety policies, appropriate supervisory practices are also outlined. These procedures are not intended to be detrimental to the research process. They have also been drafted after prudent consideration of the university's ability to effectively monitor activities and enforce compliance.

DEFINITIONS

Normal Weekday Office Hours – Between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding any weekday when the university is officially closed.

After Hours – Between 4:30 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. weekdays, Saturday, Sunday, university holidays and any other day the university is officially closed.

Working Alone – Those work situations where an employee is not directly supervised and, in the event of critical injury, health impairment, victimization, or other foreseeable serious emergency, assistance is not readily available. This would also apply if another individual is not nearby or within shouting distance.

Buddy System – A system of organizing work so that the worker can always be seen or heard by at least one other worker. In addition, the buddy system must include periodic checking of the person's safety.

Critical Injury – R.R.O. 1990, Reg 834: "An injury that places life in jeopardy; produces unconsciousness; results in substantial loss of blood; involves a fracture of a leg or arm, but not a finger or toe; involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot but not a finger or toe; consists of burns to a major portion of the body; or causes the loss of sight in an eye".

Employer – Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA) section 1: "A person who employs one or more workers or contracts for the services of one or more workers and includes a contractor or subcontractor who performs work or supplies services and a contractor or subcontractor who undertakes with an owner, constructor, contractor or subcontractor to perform work or supply services".

Hazard Assessment – The identification of hazards through a systematic hazard analysis program that includes job safety analysis, inspection, measurement and testing, and incident investigation.

Supervisor – OHSA section 1: A person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.

Worker – OHSA section 1: "A person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation". At the university, it also includes students performing research under the guidance of a faculty member.



7.15 WORKING ALONE POLICY

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

POLICY

It is recommended that individuals who work alone after hours in conditions that are considered hazard level II and III make provisions to have their status checked by another individual to verify that they have not encountered any health, safety or security incidents.

The frequency and method of checking on the individual depends on the degree of hazard of the work and the work environment.

Our practice is not to permit any undergraduate student conducting research, or engaged in thesis work, to work unsupervised in any areas with inherent risk falling within hazard level II or III. The risk assessment process will be conducted by faculty members and/or supervisors to determine the hazard level. Undergraduate students are permitted to work after hours provided they use the "buddy system" for level II or III.

1. Responsibility

The OHSA places the primary responsibility on supervisors for ensuring the well being of workers (faculty, staff, students and volunteers) under their supervision and direction. 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.

a. Supervisor

It is the supervisor's responsibility to evaluate work assignments on a case-by-case basis, considering the following:

- Any regulation, code or existing policy that prohibits a person from working alone
- Tasks and associated hazards involved in the work being assessed
- Potential consequences resulting from the worst case scenario
- Personal safety issues including but not limited to physical disabilities or medical conditions
- Probability of other people being in the area if emergency assistance is required
- Security of the work area

b. Worker/Student/Volunteer

It is the worker's responsibility to:

- Participate in the evaluation of the risks associated with the work and the work environment
- Follow any procedures outlined on the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) implemented for protection
- Work in the safest possible manner at all times
- Periodically verify the health and safety status of any other worker(s) if participating in the buddy system
- Determine who will act as a "buddy", should the buddy system be required, and ensure that the buddy is available as agreed

c. University Environmental/Occupational Health & Safety (EOHS) Committee

It is the committee's responsibility to:

- Audit copies of the hazard assessment
- Identify concerns and/or make recommendations on changes to the SOPs if they are judged to be insufficient for the protection of the workers

d. Special Constable Service

It is the responsibility of Special Constable Service to:

- Assist in providing a safe and healthy work environment for staff, faculty, students and volunteers.

2. Hazard Assessment and SOP



7.15 WORKING ALONE POLICY

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

The supervisor shall provide an SOP including but not limited to the following:

- Identification of the individual and work location
- Identification of the possible risks
- The required communication systems
- The procedures to eliminate or minimize the identified risks
- Details of how emergency assistance will be obtained in the event of an injury or incident
- Maintaining a copy of the SOP on file and updating procedures as necessary

Both the supervisor and employee must sign the hazard assessment and/or SOP form which then must be submitted to EOHS office, the respective Dean's Office and to the respective senior manager for non-academic units (i.e. Assistant Vice- President: Physical Resources, Assistant Vice-President: Human Resources, Dean of Students)

Classification System for Assessing Hazardous Areas

Hazard Level I

- There is minimal hazard with respect to the activity and the work environment.
- o Examples include, but are not limited to, general office work, computer work, writing reports

Hazard Level II

- Some minor hazard(s) exist in the activity and/or the work environment, but the risk is decreased by the control measures in place.
- o Examples include, but are not limited to, janitorial or custodian duties, laboratory work with minimal risk, working with risk population.

Note: It is a good practice to use an effective "buddy system" under certain circumstances. It is also recommended that the buddy check on his/her co- worker a minimum of once every hour.

Hazard Level III

- There is considerable hazard in the activity and/or the work environment, but the risk is minimized by multiple effective control measures.
- o Examples include, but are not limited to, working at heights, with electricity, with hazardous substances or materials, with materials at high pressure, or with high risk populations

Note: Work may be performed only when another person with knowledge of the work, its hazards, and proper emergency response procedures is within shouting distance.

Hazard Level IV

- There is considerable hazard in the activity and/or the work environment, and the risk is not minimized by multiple control measures.
- o Examples include, but not limited to, conducting repairs and maintenance to heavy equipment

Note: Working alone is not permitted.

If an individual supervisor or worker has difficulty determining a hazard level or has other concerns with respect to the policy, the departmental manager or the EOHS Office may be contacted for assistance.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, & DOCUMENTS

Working Alone Checklist

Yes No n/a Standard Operating Procedures

The supervisor shall provide an SOP including, but not limited to, the following:



7.15 WORKING ALONE POLICY

- Identifying the individual and work location.
 - Identifying the possible risks
 - Identifying the required communication systems
 - Outlining the procedures to eliminate or minimize the identified risks
- Providing details of how emergency assistance will be obtained in the event of an injury or

-

incident

- Maintaining a copy of the SOP on file and updating procedures as necessary

Yes No n/a

- Employee Training**
- Do you ensure employees are trained and competent to work alone safely?
 - Are employees aware of the hazards associated with working in isolation?
 - Are employees trained in non-violent responses to threatening situations?
 - Are employees trained in the proper use of security systems to prevent/discourage intruders?
 - Are employees trained in the questioning of strangers about the appropriateness of their presence?
 - Are employees aware of the increased risk from carrying out the hazardous work alone?

Yes No n/a

- Safe Work Procedures**
- Do you have a safe work procedure to secure the work site?
 - Does the safe work procedure include appropriate behaviours when confronted with an intruder?
- Does the safe work procedure require a check for secure work site prior to the start and at the end

-

of the shift?

Yes No n/a Communication

Do you have an effective means of communication for employees to contact persons capable of

-

responding when employees need immediate assistance? Does the method of communication involve the use of:

- Regular telephone/cell phone with a designated person?
- Regular security patrol?
- Alarm system to security services?
- Regular visit by co-workers?
- Others? Specify