




# Risk Management Manual Program

Complete Program Title: <b>Working Alone Program</b>	Risk Management Manual (RMM) Number: <b>304</b>
Approved by:   <hr/> <b>Vice-President, Operations and Finance</b>  <hr/> <b>President and Vice-Chancellor</b>	Date of Most Recent Approval: <b>May 2022</b>
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<b>DISCLAIMER:</b> <i>If there is a discrepancy between this electronic program and the written copy held by the program owner, the written copy prevails.</i>	

## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ensure as far as is reasonably possible, the health and safety of staff, faculty, students, and volunteers who may work alone:
- Regulatory restrictions prohibiting individuals from working alone are known and observed.
  - Working alone situations are identified and assessed jointly by supervisors and the person working alone.
  - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are developed as warranted by an assessment of the risk associated with the Working Alone situation under review; and
  - Training and instruction are provided to all individuals covered by a Working Alone SOP.
- 1.2 To ensure compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations, Statutes and Codes pertaining to the safety of persons working alone. (See Appendix A and Working Alone Regulatory Restrictions. Section 6.)

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 All faculty, staff, students and volunteers who work alone.

### 3 Related Documents

- 3.1 Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act R.S.O. 1990.
- 3.2 CSA Standard W117.2–19 Safety in Welding, Cutting and Allied Processes.
- 3.3 CSA Standard Z.94.4 – 18 Sec. 9.3.3, 9.3.4. Use of supplied air respiratory equipment and self-contained breathing apparatus.
- 3.4 McMaster University Confined Space Entry Program, RMM# 305.
- 3.5 McMaster Field Trips, Student Placements and Research Activity Planning and Approval Program, RMM# 801.
- 3.6 McMaster University Lockout/Tagout Program, RMM# 306.
- 3.7 McMaster University Personal Protection Equipment Program, RMM# 320.
- 3.8 McMaster University Safety Orientation and Training Program, RMM# 300.
- 3.9 McMaster University Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) Program, RMM# 301.
- 3.10 Job Hazard Analysis Program, RMM# 324
- 3.11 McMaster University Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- 3.12 McMaster University Policy on Violence in the Workplace
- 3.13 McMaster University Program & Guidelines on Violence in the Workplace

### 4 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 **Buddy System** - A system of organizing work so that the worker can be seen or heard by another worker located in close proximity to their workstation.
- 4.2 **Critical Injury** - Critical Injury is defined by O. Reg 420/21 as an injury of a serious nature which: places life in jeopardy, produces unconsciousness, substantial loss of blood, fracture of leg or arm (not a finger or toe), amputation of leg, arm, hand or foot (not finger or toe), burns to a major portion of the body, and the loss of sight in an eye
- 4.3 **Employer** - 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 the owner, constructor, contractor or subcontractor, to perform work or supply services.
- 4.4 **Supervisor** – Person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.
- 4.5 **Worker** – means any of the following, but does not include an inmate of a correctional institution or like institution or facility who participates inside the institution or facility in a work project or rehabilitation program:
  1. A person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation.

2. A secondary school student who performs 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.
3. 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 or other post-secondary institution.
4. Such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to an employer for no monetary compensation (travailleur”).

4.6 **Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs)** – Written procedures that define the techniques, processes and best practices required to conduct work safely. SOPs are required where individuals are working alone in situations that could accidentally result in a critical injury, health impairment or other foreseeable life-threatening emergency. (See samples Appendix B and Appendix C).

#### 4.7 **Acronyms:**

- CSA - Canadian Standards Association.
- CJHSC - Central Joint Health and Safety Committee.
- JHSC - Joint Health and Safety Committee.
- OHS Act - Occupational Health and Safety Act/RSO 1990 Industrial Regulations.
- SOPs - Standard Operating Procedures.
- SDS - Safety Data Sheets.
- EOHSS - Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services.
- RMSG - Risk Management Support Group.
- FHSSO - Faculty of Health Sciences Safety Office

## 5 **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### 5.1 **Role of Supervisor**

5.1.1 **The supervisor shall:** perform an assessment, in consultation with the worker, by evaluating work assignments on a case-by-case basis, considering the following criteria:

- is there a regulation, code or existing policy that prohibits a person from working alone on the task being assessed;
- tasks and associated hazards involved in the work being assessed;
- consequences resulting from a worse case scenario;

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- possibility that an injury or incident could prevent the employee from calling from or leaving the area;
  - personal safety issues for individuals working alone after regular working hours, taking into account the potential for harassment and violence;
  - potential for other people to be in the area if emergency assistance is required;
  - emergency response time;
  - security of the work area;
  - worker's / student's/ volunteer's training and experience; and
  - physical disabilities or medical conditions.

#### 5.1.2 **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):**

If, after consultation with the involved individual(s), it is decided that they can work alone safely under controlled conditions, the supervisor shall provide a Standard Operating Procedure that includes but shall not be limited to the following:

- identification of the individual(s) and work location;
- identification of the possible risks that may arise out of or in connection with the work to be performed;
- the required communications system i.e. radio, telephone, buddy system, etc.;
- 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 which may endanger the health and safety of the person working alone; and
- the SOP shall be kept on file and procedures updated as necessary

**NB. Working Alone Procedures can be included in the project or task SOP. This may include existing laboratory procedures.**

#### 5.2 **Role of the Department Chair / Director:**

The Department Chair / Director shall:

- provide the resources and direction required to support the Working Alone Program.

### 5.3 **Role of Worker / Student / Volunteer:**

The Worker / Student / Volunteer shall:

- participate in the evaluation of the risks associated with tasks which involve persons working alone; and
- follow the procedures outlined in any Standard Operating Procedure implemented for their protection.

### 5.4 **Role of Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services and Faculty of Health Sciences Safety Office:**

EOHSS and FHSSO shall:

- provide advice regarding the need for and development of SOPs for tasks which involve persons working alone.

### 5.5 **Role of Security Services (appropriate security group to your site)**

Security Services shall:

- provide safety surveillance and /or emergency response as required; and
- participate in the assessment of work alone SOPs when requested.

### 5.6 **Role of JHSCs:**

The JHSCs shall:

- review copies of all worker related SOPs for Working Alone situations; and
- make recommendations for improvements.

### 5.7 **Role of CJHSC:**

The CJHSC shall:

- review and make comment on the Working Alone Program on a scheduled basis.

## 6 **REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS**

### 6.1 **Working Alone is prohibited when working:**

- in a confined space entry (O. Reg. 632/05, and McMaster University's Confined Space Entry Program, RMM# 305);

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- on live electrical installations, equipment, or conductor operating at a nominal voltage of 300 volts or more, except while testing equipment or trouble shooting [O. Reg.851 for Industrial Establishments, Section 42.1 (3)];
  - on electrical transmission systems or outdoor distribution systems rated at more than 750 volts (See O. Reg.851 Section 42.2, Industrial Establishments);
  - in trenches (O Reg. 213 Section 225 Construction Projects);
  - on 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 (if applicable O.Reg. 851 Section 73 Industrial Establishments);
  - on suspended scaffolds or when using fall arrest equipment;
  - with quick-acting highly toxic material as described by the Safety Data Sheet e.g. inorganic cyanides, fumigants, etc.;
  - in an atmosphere that requires the use of supplied air respiratory equipment or self- contained breathing apparatus (CSA Standard Z94.4-18
  - in a place that places a person at risk of drowning (O. Reg. 213 Section 27: O. Reg. 851, Section 86));
  - where the operator of a vehicle, crane, mobile equipment, or other similar material handling equipment does not have a full view of the intended path of travel (O. Reg.851, Section 56);
  - where a vehicle, crane or similar equipment is operated in a location where the vehicle or its load could come into contact with a live power line;
  - for welding operations where a fire watcher is required as per the current CSA Standard W117.2-06 for Safety in Welding, Cutting and Allied Processes, and
  - **under all conditions that based on the risk assessment conducted by the supervisor in consultation with the worker, JHSC representative(s) and a representative from EOHSS/FHSSO, are deemed to require more than one person.**

## 7 RECORDS

- 7.1 **Retention:** To facilitate external audits by regulatory agencies, records of SOPs for persons working alone shall be kept for a period of three (3) years after the completion of the work.
- 7.2 **Filing:** Copies of SOPs for persons working alone will be kept by:
- The supervisor responsible for the drafting and or approval of the SOP.

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**Appendix A: Requirements of Occupational Health and Safety Act**

## Duties of Employers, Section 25 (excerpt)

- (2) Without limiting the strict duty imposed by subsection (1), an employer shall,
- (a) provide information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker;
  - (b) acquaint a worker or a person in authority over a worker with any hazard in the work and in the handling, storage, use, disposal and transport of any article, device, equipment or a biological, chemical or physical agent;
  - (c) take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.

## Duties of Supervisors, Section 27 (excerpt)

**Additional duties of supervisor**

- (2) Without limiting the duty imposed by subsection (1), a supervisor shall,
- (a) advise a worker of the existence of any potential or actual danger to the health or safety of the worker of which the supervisor is aware;
  - (b) where so prescribed, provide a worker with written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for protection of the worker; and
  - (c) take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker. R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1, s. 27.

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## **Appendix B Generic Working Alone SOP for Personal Safety Issues Associated with Individuals Working Alone (Sample)**

### **McMaster University Persons Working Alone SOP**

**Department:** Computer and Information Services  
**Location:** ABB Room # XYZ  
**Individual(s) Involved:** Jane Doe or See Attached list  
**Work Project:** Word Processing after regular hours in isolated office area.  
**Duration of Project:** September 2009 – December 2009

#### **Safety Procedures in Place to Minimize Risk:**

##### **Work:**

- (a) Work related safety procedures reviewed and work area assessed for safety hazards.
- (b) Work area secured against unauthorized ingress to the area.

##### **Training:**

- (a) Review of safety and emergency procedures.

##### **Communications:**

- (a) Security Services to be notified by person working alone indicating the location and a estimated duration of work project.
- (b) Security Services notified prior to leaving the area on completion of the project.

##### **Emergency Procedures:**

- (a) Fire and Medical Emergency response posted and reviewed with person working alone.
- (b) Emergency response telephone number for campus locations Security Services [dial Ext. 88 from campus phones or from cellular phones dial 905-522-4135] or if located at Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) contact security at Ext. 5555 posted on the phone.



- (c) Emergency response telephone number for offsite location, (911 or applicable emergency numbers for your offsite location) posted on the phone.

**Name of Supervisor:**

**Signature:**

**Name of Individual (s):**

**Signature:**

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**Appendix C Working Alone Standard Operating Procedure (Sample)**

**(NB Such procedures may be documented in existing laboratory procedures)**

**McMaster University  
Person Working Alone SOP**

**Department:** Chemistry  
**Location (s):** ABB Room # XYZ  
**Individual(s) Involved:** John Doe, Graduate Student or See list attached  
**Work Project:** Solvent distillation using industrial grade solvents (See list attached)  
**Duration:** September 2009 – May 2009

**Safety Procedures in Place to Minimize Risk:****Work:**

- (a) Safety Procedures detailed in the approved research project reviewed with all persons working alone.
- (b) Work area assessed for safety hazards.

**Training:**

- (a) All persons involved in the project have received task specific safety training.
- (b) All persons involved in the project have successfully completed the WHMIS training course and have reviewed and have access to the Lab Safety Manual.
- (c) All persons involved in the project have access to and have read the applicable Safety Data Sheet(s)

**Communications:**

- (a) Security Services to be notified by person working alone indicating the location and estimated duration of the project.
- (b) Operation of panic alarm to Security Services tested on a routine basis.
- (c) Persons working alone instructed to check for and make contact with individuals working in adjacent areas.
- (d) Security Services notified prior to leaving the area on completion of the project.

**Emergency Procedures**

- (a) Fire and Medical emergency response procedures posted and reviewed with all persons working alone.

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- (b) Emergency response telephone number for campus locations Security Services [dial Ext. 88 from campus phones or from cellular phones dial 905-522-4135] or if located at Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) contact security at Ext. 5555 posted on the phone.
  - (c) Emergency response telephone number for offsite location, (911 or applicable emergency numbers for your offsite location) posted on the phone.
  - (d) Fume hood low flow alarm tested on a regular basis and procedure reviewed with all persons working alone.

**Name of Supervisor:** Jane Doe

**Signature:**

**Name of Individual (s):** John Doe / See list attached

CC Dept. Chair

**APPENDIX D - SAMPLE**

Date

**Working alone standard operating procedure - submission for review (for more details see RMM#304)**

## Checklist for Working Alone

- To be assessed jointly by supervisor and persons working alone
- Standard operating procedures are to be developed as warranted
- Be aware of regulatory restrictions affecting working alone - see section 6.1 of RMM 304
- Submit this report to the JHSC of your area for their review

<u>Room #'s</u>	<u>Building</u>
<u>Supervisor(s)</u>	<u>Emerg Home Phone #</u>

Expected hours during which staff will work alone outside of regular working hours

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Emergency assistance

In the event of an emergency, assistance will be provided by:

Security of the area - personal safety issues

All doors to be kept locked when staff are working.

Any additional security controls specific for your area?

The following table will serve to evaluate the tasks, hazards and controls in place - for tasks to be done by the person(s) working alone.

Task	Hazard	Controls	Worst Case Scenario

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Protocols in place at the workplace for working alone

- 1) A central telephone must be available with emergency telephone numbers of supervisors or designates posted - where is it? Or identify the alternative communication system which you have in place. Eg radio system.
- 2) Staff will check in with their supervisors (designate) every \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. (based on the risk of the work they are doing)

Training and Experience

Refer to Training Matrix to ensure all Health and Safety Training is complete.

List of individuals who may work alone

Signature (s)

High risk tasks which may **NOT** be performed by individuals working alone

Issues which are still of concern to staff/supervisors

Signature of supervisor(s)