



## UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

Occupational Health & Safety  
4401 University Drive  
Lethbridge, AB, Canada  
T1K 3M4  
403-329-2099/2190

### WORKING ALONE PROTOCOL

#### 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, the health and safety of staff, faculty and students who work alone. With regard to the hazards arising from or connected with work being conducted on behalf of the University, departments/faculties will ensure that:
- Regulatory restrictions prohibiting persons from working alone are known and observed;
  - Working alone situations are identified and assessed jointly by supervisors, staff and students;
  - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are developed as warranted by an assessment of the hazards associated with the Work Alone situation under review;
  - Supervisors provide on-going training and instruction to staff and students covered by a Work Alone SOP.
- 1.2 To ensure compliance with the current Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Workplace Health and Safety, Working Alone regulation.

Access the Web site [www.whs.gov.ab.ca](http://www.whs.gov.ab.ca) for the General Safety Amendment Regulation – “The Working Alone Amendment and the Occupational Health and Safety Act

#### 2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 All persons who work alone.

#### 3.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 3.1 Working Alone Safely – A Guide for Employers and Employees  
3.2 The Working Alone Amendment  
3.3 Questions and Answers

Available from Workplace Health and Safety web site above.

#### 4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Supervisor: Person who has control over assigned work and authority over the persons conducting the work OR a person who has been delegated responsibility for instructing, directing or controlling staff or students working or studying at the University of Lethbridge.

Supervisors at the University of Lethbridge include faculty deans, chairs, directors, research supervisors, principal investigators, managers, foremen, and any other persons in positions of authority.

- 4.2. Worker: Means a person engaged in an occupation. (Section 1(m) of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*)

Employees/Workers at the University of Lethbridge include support staff, academic staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students, volunteers and visiting scientists.

- 4.3 Occupation: Means every occupation, employment, business, calling or pursuit over which the Legislature has jurisdiction. (Section 1 (g) of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*)

- 4.4 Worksite: Means a location where a worker is, or is likely to be, engaged in any occupation and includes any vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in an occupation. (Section 1 (n) of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*)

- 4.5 Working Alone: To work alone at a work site in circumstances where assistance is not readily available in the event of an injury, illness or emergency. (*Working Alone Safely: A Guide for Employers and Employees*)

- 4.6 Effective Means of Communication: The “Working Alone Amendment” states:  
“Employers must have a communication system for employees to contact other people who can respond to the employees’ needs. The system must be appropriate to the hazards involved. As an alternative to an “effective means of communication”, an employer can establish an effective “contact” system that is appropriate to the hazard. Examples of a contact system include visiting the worker, scheduling check-ins with other workers or designated persons, reporting to an office or particular person upon completion of a task, and a visual contact with other persons who can offer assistance when needed. The frequency of contact must be based on a hazard assessment. At a work site involving minimum hazards, the requirement may involve a conversation between workers at the time of shift change. Alternatively, a more hazardous work situation may require regular check-ins or visits by a supervisor.

An employer cannot, upon performing the hazard assessment, decide that a means of communication or contact is unnecessary. If a worker works alone at a work site in circumstances where assistance is not readily available when needed, a means of communication or contact must be provided.”

- 4.7 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Written procedures that define the techniques, processes and best practices required to conduct work safely.

- 4.8 Buddy System: A system of organizing work so that the worker can be seen or heard by another worker that is working in close proximity to his/her work area.

- 4.9 Resources: Fire alarm pull station, fire extinguisher, eye wash station, emergency shower, MSDS sheets, first aid kits, first aiders, small chemical spill clean up kit, telephones, pay phone, etc.

- 4.10 Hazard: A condition with the potential of causing human illness or injury, damage to equipment or structures, loss of material, damage to the workplace environment, or a combination of these.

## **5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 5.1 Supervisor is required to:

- 5.1.1 Identify workers who are required to work alone.
- 5.1.2 Identify hazards to the worker from the nature of the work, isolation and conditions at the work site.
- 5.1.3 Identify necessary actions to eliminate or reduce the hazards and implement these actions.
- 5.1.4 Eliminate or reduce hazards by:

- Providing written instructions stating limitations on and/or prohibition of specific activities while working alone.
- Providing sufficient training and instruction for safe work practices and ensuring a minimum standard of competence.
- Providing applicable personal protective equipment.
- Maintaining regular contact with the person working alone.
- Providing emergency and survival supplies for working under extreme conditions.

- 5.2 Dean/Chair/Director/Manager shall review and approve the Working Alone Protocol for the protection of persons working alone.
- 5.3 Worker/Student shall participate in the evaluation of the hazards associated with tasks that involve persons working alone and follow the practices outlined in the Working Alone Protocol.
- 5.4 Occupational Health & Safety shall review and approve all Working Alone Protocols and provide advice regarding the need for and development of the protocol for tasks that involve persons working alone.

## 6.0 RECORDS

Records of Working Alone Protocols will be kept by:

- The supervisor responsible for the preparation and/or approval of the protocol.
- Occupational Health & Safety.

## 7.0 DEVELOPING THE WORKING ALONE PROTOCOL

The protocol should include, but shall not be limited, to the following:

- Identification of the work location (should include department/faculty and room(s) location(s));
- Identification of the hazards that may arise out of/or in connection with the work being performed;
- The actions taken to eliminate or minimize the identified hazards;
- The required communication system e.g. telephone, cell phone, radio, buddy system, check-ins, etc.;
- Details of how emergency assistance will be obtained and provided in the event of an injury/illness or incident which may endanger the health and safety of the individual working alone;
- **“In a fire/life emergency situation, call Campus Security at 329-2345 and identify yourself, what the emergency is and the location”;**
- Posting emergency numbers near the telephones;
- Posting names of the currently certified first aiders;
- Location of resources such as fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers, eye wash station, emergency shower, MSDS sheets, first aid kits, list of first aiders, small chemical spill clean up kit, telephones, pay phone, etc.
- All workers will be made aware of this protocol;
- Every protocol shall be dated and signed by a department/faculty representative or supervisor;
- The protocol shall be registered with Occupational Health & Safety.