# Working Alone Guidelines

**What is working alone?**

WorkSafe Western Australia defines Working Alone as follows:

*A person is alone at work when:*
*- they are on their own,*
*- they cannot be seen or heard by another person; and*
*- they cannot expect a visit from another worker or member of the public for some time.*

The term "working alone" is also interchangeable with "working in isolation".

Working Alone guidelines are aimed to assist Staff, Students and Contractors who by time, location or the nature of work are working or likely to be working alone. Typical examples include, **but are not limited to**:

- on campus after hours
- working in a location with no outside contact e.g. plant room
- working alone undertaking hazardous activities e.g. lab, maintenance, workshop

**What does the legislation require?**

The Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 states that:

*An employer shall, as far as is practicable, provide and maintain a working environment in which the employees of the employer are not exposed to hazards.*

In addition to this with respect to working alone, the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996, Regulation 3.3: Communication with isolated employees requires;

*- a means of communication to enable an employee to call for help in the event of an emergency; and.*

*- have a procedure for regular contact with this employee.*

For more information visit WorkSafe Western Australia's Working Alone webpage.

**What can I do to ensure my safety after hours?**

Security and Traffic Services have established several initiatives to assist with the security of staff, students and visitors whilst on campus. Please click on the links below for more information on how you can use the services to assist with maintaining your safety after hours:

Alone on Campus
Personal Safety

Security are the first point of call for Emergencies on campus. In the Case of a Life Threatening Emergency Call "000" (or "0000" from an internal ECU phone) and then Security on 6304 3333. For more information on the Emergency Guidelines please visit Security and Traffic Services website.

**What do I need to do to reduce the risk of injury or harm?**

Working with another person is the best way to control the risks associated with working alone. Whilst it is recognised that having 2 persons undertake an activity is not always practicable, it is important not lose sight of the objective and that is to reduce the likelihood of injury or harm. In this instance, communication is the key to reducing the severity of injury or harm resulting from working alone. If this is deemed to be the better strategy, the amount and type of contact required will be influenced by the type of activity being undertaken. Therefore, to ensure that appropriate controls are implemented the University requires that a Risk Assessment is undertaken for all hazardous activities. As such, the following documentation from WorkSafe should be applied prior to undertaking any activities that require staff to work alone.

Working Alone Risk Assessment Checklist

In addition assistance may be obtained by applying the WorkSafe Guidance Note Working Alone.

**Note:** A Risk Assessment is not required each time a job is undertaken, however it is required for any new activity or when an activity changes. For tasks that occur on a regular basis consider developing Safe Operating Procedures. These should be undertaken by a competent person who understands the task.

For more information, please contact a member by email osh@ecu.edu.au .

# WORKSAFE WESTERN AUSTRALIA CHECKLIST

This checklist has been developed by WorkSafe Western Australia and has been adopted by ECU as a general guide to assist staff when undertaking a risk assessment to determine if a staff member, student or contractor is deemed to be Working Alone.

**Instructions:** A competent person having knowledge of the task should complete this checklist in consultation with the staff member or student. Any "**NO**" responses indicates a gap in the process and further action or consideration is required. This does not necessarily mean that the person is unable to work alone, it is merely identifying a hazard that requires further risk assessment prior to the work commencing. The persons undertaking the assessment must satisfy themselves that after evaluating a "**NO**" response that the current controls are appropriate.

**For further guidance please contact a member of the Health and Safety team by emailing osh@ecu.edu.au**

**EMPLOYEE/POSITION/TASK:**

_____

# WORKSAFE CHECKLIST – Working Alone - ANZSICS 84, 86 & 87

| | Sec/Reg | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| **Working Alone** | | |
| 1. Is there a procedure for working alone? | S19.1 | |
| 2. Is there an easily used, reliable and uninterrupted means of communication for employees working alone or isolated due to the time, location or nature of work to call for help in an emergency? Consider – length of time spent alone, ,location,  time of day. | S19.1 | |
| 3. Is there a procedure for regular contact to be made with an employee from an operations room or similar base and are contact persons and employees working alone trained in the procedure? | S19.1 | |
| 4. In the event of an incident, have emergency arrangements been made to provide rapid support to employees working alone on potentially hazardous duties? | S 19(1) | |
| 5. Are EPIRB or satellite phones provided along with mobile phones? | | |
| 6. Have "black spots" where there is no phone coverage been considered and investigated?. | S 19(1) | |
| 7.  Have remote locations been previously visited, and risk assessments completed?. | S 19(1) | |
| 8.  Are remote trips planned to ensure there are adequate facilities available i.e. clean – toilets, wash basins, other facilities? | | |
| 9.  Do risk assessments of remote locations include the possibility of violence/aggression? E.g. intruders, dogs | S 19(1) | |
| 10. Has consideration been given to ergonomic equipment needs? Consider how items will be stored and moved.  Manual handling considerations, unstable, uneven surfaces, sand, time of visit - lighting. | S19.1 | |
| 11. Are risk assessments are periodically reviewed to ensure that they are still relevant? | S19.1 | |
| 12. With respect to the nature of the work to be performed, is there adequate information and instruction for the person to work alone safely? Consider for example, are the tools and equipment used high risk – chain saw/firearm.  Is all equipment serviced and maintained? | S19.1 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 13. Are fatigue issues considered and likely to increase any risk? Consider extremes of temperature. | S19.1 | |
| 14. Characteristics of worker. Are cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds likely to increase the level of risk? E.g. fasting in hot weather. Dietary considerations. | S19.1 | |
| 15. General characteristics of person(s) undertaking the task. Consider whether the level of experience and training, driver competence, psychological maturity, pre existing medical condition, stressful situations, physical capability will increase the level of risk? Will the person's age increase the level of risk? | S 19(1) | |
| 16. Is there an adequate level of supervision in place? | S 19(1) | |
| 14. Have the special needs of the industry been considered? E.g. agricultural, pastoral, forest. | S 19(1) | |

**Completed by:**

Name: _____     Position: _____

Signed: _____     Date: _____

**Manager Sign off:**

I have reviewed the completed checklist and am satisfied with the responses provided. Where a gap has been identified or there is a risk of injury or harm, a risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure reasonable control measures have been put in place.

Name: _____     Position: _____

Signed: _____     Date: _____