

Safety Facts: Working Alone*



Working alone or in isolation means working where there is no readily available assistance in case of emergency. A worker does not have assistance that is readily available in case of emergency, injury, or ill health.

First, the general duties of employers to workers are to ensure the health and safety of all workers working for that employer. Second, employer must perform a risk assessment relating to the hazards the worker may be exposed to and take the necessary measures to ensure their safety.

Key Characteristics

To determine whether or not a worker is considered to be working alone or in isolation you must do a risk assessment. Your assessment should answer some basic questions.

- Presence of others: Who is in the immediate vicinity that can help my worker?
- Awareness: How will those people know my worker needs help?
- Willingness: Will these people be able to help in a timely manner?
- Timeliness: Are those in the vicinity able to provide assistance in a timely basis?



Associated Risks

Lone workers are at increased risk of confrontations or violence if they are on shift during late night hours. Lone workers must be able to get assistance if they are injured or are ill or if they require treatment and emergency intervention.

Preventative Next Steps

- Identify all jobs which are considered working alone or situations which may result in a worker working alone or in isolation.
- Conduct a risk assessment of hazards which may arise. Consider previous incidents which may have occurred at your facility or nearby.
- Ask for employees input to help with identifying the problems and solutions.
- Try to consider the likelihood and consequences of the hazard occurring while your employee is working alone.

Based on your risk assessment, you will need to develop control measures; these could include engineering or administrative controls, and safe work procedures. These measures may include implementing a person check system but may consist of other procedures that will meet this goal.

Administrative Controls

Provide, use and schedule work activities and resources in the workplace.

Plan, organize, staff and coordinate, for the purpose of controlling risk.

Examples are: ensuring more than one employee is available to work together or implementation of a Safe Operating Procedure.

Engineering Controls

The physical arrangement, design or alteration of workstations, equipment, materials, production facilities or other aspects of the physical work environment, for the purpose of controlling risk.

Examples include: modifying the physical work environment such as installing mirror, cameras or making worker observation possible. Install locks and fobs to access door ways.



For additional resources visit:

WorkSafeBC, [https://www.worksafebc.com/en/search?q=Working%20Alone%3A%20A%20Handbook%20for%20Small%20Businesses%20&sort=relevancy&f:language-facet=\[English\]](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/search?q=Working%20Alone%3A%20A%20Handbook%20for%20Small%20Businesses%20&sort=relevancy&f:language-facet=[English])

For specific regulatory information visit www.worksafebc.com—OHS Regulation Part 4.20.1-4.23

