Working Alone Administrative Procedure: Questions and Answers

Purpose: This Q&A document is designed to help Sask DLC employees understand roles and responsibilities under the Working Alone Administrative Procedure (AP). It addresses common questions and clarifies key aspects of the AP.

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Q1: What does 'working alone or in isolation' mean?

A: Working alone or in isolation refers to working at a worksite as the only worker at that worksite, in circumstances where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of injury, ill health or emergency.

Q2: Does this procedure apply if I work from home?

A: This procedure does not apply to standard remote work from home situations where employees perform routine office duties. Remote work is covered under the Remote Work Administrative Procedure(AP), which includes a separate risk assessment process to ensure health and safety standards are met. However, remote work may be subject to this procedure if a risk assessment identifies specific hazards or the location is significantly isolated with limited emergency access.

Q4: What if I work from home as part of an accommodation arrangement?

A: If you work from home under an accommodation arrangement, your situation is covered under the Employment Accommodation and Remote Work APs. Your work-from-home arrangement will be assessed to ensure health and safety standards are met while respecting your accommodation needs. Contact Human Resources or your supervisor if you have questions about safety protocols for your specific arrangement.

Q5: Does this administrative procedure apply if I work in a location where there are other people nearby, even if they are from different organizations?

A: No, this policy does not apply if assistance is readily available from people nearby, even if they work for different organizations. The key factor is accessibility of help and resources in the event of an emergency. If there are people close by who could hear you, see you and help if needed, then you are not considered to be working alone or in isolation. For example, if you work in a school division building where school division staff are present and could respond to an emergency, this procedure does not apply to you.

Q6: When does this policy apply?

A: This policy applies when you are working in circumstances where assistance is not readily available to you in the event of injury, ill health or emergency. Examples include:

- Working alone in an empty or isolated building where no one else is present
- Working in a location where others cannot see, hear or reach you in a reasonable time
- Working in significantly isolated locations with limited emergency access
- Working in circumstances where you cannot quickly get help if needed

The determining factor is whether help and resources are accessible in an emergency, not whether you are the only Sask DLC employee present. If you are uncertain whether this administrative procedure applies to your situation, speak with your supervisor.

Q7: Does this policy apply if I come in early before others arrive or stay late after others leave?

A: It depends on the frequency and duration.
Occasional or brief periods: Notify your supervisor, ensure someone knows you are there and arrange a simple check-in. It is your responsibility to ensure your supervisor is aware and that appropriate safety measures are in place.

Regular or extended periods: The full procedure applies, including risk assessment and formal check-in plan. If unsure, ask your supervisor.
If you are unsure which approach applies to your situation, speak with your supervisor.

Q8: What if my supervisor is in a different location than me?

A: The Working Alone administrative procedure still applies. Your supervisor can conduct check-ins remotely using phone, email or MS Teams. Physical proximity to your supervisor is not required - what matters is that regular communication can be maintained and your supervisor or Check-In Designate can respond appropriately if you cannot be reached.

Q9: Do I need to complete a new risk assessment every time I work alone?

A: Not necessarily. A single risk assessment can apply to multiple occasions if you are performing the exact same tasks in the same location under the same conditions. However, if there is any change in location, equipment, environment or any other factor that could affect your safety, a new risk assessment is required and changes to the check-in procedure may be necessary.

Q10: What are my responsibilities as an employee working alone?

A: It is your responsibility to protect your own health and safety when working alone**.** Your specific responsibilities include:

- Informing your supervisor if occasional lone work or work in isolation is required;
- Communicating any unsafe conditions to your supervisor;
- Following the working alone controls and procedures as agreed with your supervisor;
- Ensuring your communication tool (telephone, email, MS Teams) is operable and capable of completing check-in procedures;
- Following all job procedures, Sask DLC administrative procedures and processes; and
- Using proper personal protective equipment (PPE) if required.

Q11: What should I do if I notice an unsafe condition while working alone?

A: Stop the work immediately if you believe it is unsafe. Communicate the unsafe condition to your supervisor as soon as possible. Do not continue working until the hazard has been addressed and proper controls are in place.

Q12: What if I need to travel to another location to perform work?

A: If you are required to travel to a location different from your usual workplace to perform work, you must travel with a means of electronic or phone communication. **Ensure your supervisor has approved your travel and ensure your communication device is charged and functional before you leave.**

Q13: How often will someone check in on me?

A: The check-in frequency is determined by your risk assessment and can vary.

Q14: What happens if I miss a scheduled check-in?

A: If you are not available at the predetermined check-in time, the following escalation process will occur:

- The Check-In Designate will attempt to reach you within five minutes of the predetermined time.
- If unsuccessful, they will make another attempt within 15 minutes of the original time.
- If still unable to reach you, they will notify your emergency contact, then local building security or Sask DLC Facilities contact.
- If those attempts are unsuccessful, they will call 9-1-1.

Important: If you are unable to check in at the predetermined time, you should provide notice in advance and adapt the check-in plan, alternatively you must attempt to call the Check-In Designate within five minutes of the set original check-in time. It is your responsibility to maintain communication.

Q15: What methods of communication can be used for check-ins?

A: Check-ins can be conducted via telephone (mobile or work phone), email, Microsoft Teams or SMS text message. The specific method will be documented in your Communication Check-In Plan. You are responsible for ensuring your communication tool is operable and capable of completing the check-in procedure.

Q16: What should I do in case of an emergency while working alone?

A: In case of an emergency, you must:

- Contact 9-1-1 immediately
- Follow posted emergency and evacuation procedures at the location
- Notify your supervisor as soon as possible

Q17: What types of emergencies should I be prepared for?

A: Your supervisor will ensure you are aware of relevant emergency procedures for your specific situation, including responses to medical emergencies, violent situations, fires and weather-related risks. Make sure you know where emergency exits are located, where first aid supplies are kept and how to access emergency services from your work location.

Q18: Do I need to report incidents or near-misses?

A: Yes. All incidents, near-misses or safety concerns involving working alone or in isolation must be reported in accordance with Sask DLC's incident reporting process via OHS Incident Reporting and Investigation Form, which is available under the Sask DLC incident reporting process via Incident/Injury Report : Sask DLC Staff Support Services.It is your responsibility to report these situations.

Q19: Where can I find the Working Alone or in Isolation Risk Assessment Template and Communication Check-In Plan?

A: These templates are internal references to the Working Alone AP. The Working Alone AP and supporting tools are available on The Hub, under Departments – Policies & Planning- Administrative Procedure – Section 100 General Administration.

Q20: Can the working alone procedure be modified for specific situations?

A: The Working Alone Administrative Procedure establishes minimum requirements. Control measures and check-in procedures must be tailored to each specific situation based on the risk assessment. However, the fundamental requirements (notification, risk assessment, communication plan, emergency

procedures) must always be followed. Any modifications must be documented and approved by your supervisor.

Remember: Working alone safety is a shared responsibility. Sask DLC, supervisors and employees all play critical roles in ensuring health and safety standards are met. Employees must take an active role in protecting their own health and safety by following procedures, communicating concerns and maintaining awareness of their work environment.

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