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Submitted: Risk Management Support Group	Approved: Karen Belaire Vice President, Administration	Authorized: Dr. Peter George President and Vice-Chancellor

1 PURPOSE


- 1.1 To ensure as far as is reasonably possible, the health and safety of staff, faculty, students, and volunteers with regard to the risks arising from or connected with work being conducted on behalf of the University by ensuring that:
- 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 (SOP) are developed as warranted by an assessment of the risk associated with the Work Alone situation under review.
 - Training and instruction is provided to all individuals covered by a Working Alone SOP.
- 1.2 To ensure compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety and other Regulations, Statutes and Codes pertaining to the safety of persons working alone. (See Appendix A and Working Alone Regulatory Restrictions Page 4. 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 New Brunswick OSHA Code of practice for working Alone Regulations
- 3.3 CSA Standard W117.2–94 Safety in Welding, Cutting and Allied Processes.
- 3.4 CSA Standard Z.94. – 93 Sec. 9.3.3, 9.3.4. Use of supplied air respiratory equipment and self contained breathing apparatus.
- 3.5 McMaster University Confined Space Entry Program.
- 3.6 McMaster University Field Trip Policy
- 3.7 McMaster University Lockout/Tagout program.
- 3.8 McMaster University Respiratory Protection Program.
- 3.9 McMaster University Safety Orientation and Training Program.
- 3.10 McMaster University Standard Operating Procedures Policy.
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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 his/her workstation.
- 4.2 Critical Injury - An injury that places life in jeopardy, produces unconsciousness, results in substantial loss of blood, involves a fracture or amputation, burns to a major portion of the body or loss of sight.
- 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 - Person who has entered into or is employed under a contract of service or apprenticeship, written or oral, express or implied, manual labour or otherwise.
- 4.6 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) - Written procedures that define the techniques, processes and best practices required to conduct work safely. SOP's 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.
 - OHSA – Occupational Health and Safety Act / Industrial Regulations.
 - SOP's – Standard Operating Procedures.
 - MSDS – Material Safety Data Sheets.
 - RMS – Risk Management Services.
 - RMSG - Risk Management Support Group (i.e. Risk Management Services, Faculty of Health Sciences Safety Office, Health Physics, Physical Plant Safety/Training Office and Security Services).

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Role of Supervisor:

- 5.1.1 **Assessment:** The supervisor shall evaluate 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;
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- consequences resulting from a worse case scenario;
- 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;
- potential for other people to be in the area if emergency assistance is required;
- emergency response time;
- security of the work area;
- employees / students training and experience and
- physical disabilities or medical conditions.

5.1.2 **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's):**

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;
- registering the SOP with the Department Chair or Director and the JHSC for worker related SOP's.
- maintaining a copy of the SOP on file and updating procedures 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 Policy.

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;

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- follow the procedures outlined in any Standard Operating Procedure implemented for their protection.

5.4 **Role of Risk Management Support Group:**

The appropriate representative(s) from the RMSG shall:

- provide advice regarding the need for and development of SOP's for tasks which involve persons working alone;
- conduct periodic audits of the effectiveness of Work Alone SOP's.

5.5 **Role of Security Services**

Security Services shall:

- provide safety surveillance and or emergency response as required and
- participate in the assessment of work alone SOP's as required.

5.6 **Role of JHSC's:**

The JHSC's shall:

- review copies of all worker related SOP's for Working Alone situations.


5.7 **Role of CJHSC:**

- The CJHSC shall review and make comment on the Persons Working Alone Policy on an annual basis.

6 **REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS**

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

- in a confined space entry (O. Reg. 851 RRO, 1990, Section 69 F and McMaster University's Confined Space Entry Program);
 - 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);
 - 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);
 - 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;
 - on suspended scaffolds or when using fall arrest equipment;
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- with quick-acting highly toxic material as described by the Material Safety Data Sheet e.g. inorganic cyanides, fumigants etc.;
- requires the use of supplied air respiratory equipment or self- contained breathing apparatus (CSA Standard Z94.4-93 Sections 9.3.3, 9.3.4.);
- 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;
- involves welding operations where a fire watcher is required as per the current CSA Standard W117.2-94 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 the Risk Management Group, are deemed to require more than one person.**

7 RECORDS

7.1 **Retention:** To facilitate external audits by regulatory agencies, records of SOP's 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 SOP's for persons working alone will be kept by:

- The supervisor responsible for the drafting and or approval of the SOP
- The Department Head or Chair for worker related SOP's

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Appendix A Requirements of Occupational Health and Safety Act

Duties of Employers, Section 25 (2)

- (a) provide information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect the health and safety of the worker;
- (d) acquaint a worker or 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;
- (h) take every precaution reasonable in the circumstance for the protection of a worker.

Duties Supervisors, Section 27 (2)

- (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 the protection of the worker; and
 - (c) take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker
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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 2002 – December 2002

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. An 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 (88 or 5555) posted on the phone.

(Over)




Name of Supervisor:

Signature:

Name of Individual (s):

Signature:

CC JHSC

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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 2002 – May 2004

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 have reviewed and have access to the Lab Safety Manual.

Communications:

- (a) Security Services to be notified by person working alone indicating the location and estimated duration of the project.
- (b) Operation of emergency ring down 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.

Emergency Procedures

- (a) Fire Safety and Medical emergency response procedures posted and reviewed with all persons working alone.
- (b) Emergency response telephone number (**88 or 5555**) posted on the phone
- (c) Fume hood low flow alarm tested on a regular basis and procedure reviewed with all persons working alone

(Over)



Name of Supervisor: Jane Doe

Signature:

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

CC Dept. Chair
