

Working Alone or in Isolation

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, working alone or in isolation “means to work in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker (a) in case of an emergency, or (b) in case the worker is injured or in ill health.”

Staff members who work alone or in isolation tend to be more vulnerable than those who have co-workers present, particularly if the lone worker is on shift outside of regular school hours.

If a lone worker is injured or an emergency occurs, how does the worker get help? What if the worker is unconscious? Even though such incidents aren't that common, when they do occur, the consequences can be serious.

Employers need to establish clear, written procedures for checking the well-being of staff who will be working alone. Person check procedures should include the following:

- The designated person who will establish contact
- Time intervals between checks
- A check at the end of the shift
- A procedure to follow in case the worker cannot be contacted

These procedures are important year-round, but are particularly relevant during the summer months when the workforce is greatly reduced.

Working alone or in isolation may also put workers at greater risk of workplace violence. (See the Violence in the Workplace poster for more information.)

If you are hiring students to undertake summer work, remember to follow the guidelines for young/new workers. (See the Young/New Workers poster for more information.)

In the OHS Regulation

- Regulation: Sections 4.20.1–4.22, Working Alone or in Isolation

In the OHS Guidelines

- Guidelines: G4.20.1–G4.21, Working Alone or in Isolation

Resources

Available from
WorkSafeBC.com/Publications

- *Working Alone: A Handbook for Small Businesses* (BK131)
- *A Workbook for Employers and Workers: Preventing Violence* (BK112)

Safety is everyone's responsibility!

WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line: 604 276-3100 • Toll-free: 1 888 621-SAFE (7233)

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