

## Lone Working Procedure

**This procedure is not intended to cover the activities of the reactive on-call rota that is in place within Estates and Property Services. There is a separate and specific procedure that addresses risks from these activities outwith core hours.**

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Lone Working and Out of Hours Access Policy Statement<sup>1</sup>.

In the interests of personal safety it is generally expected that lone working should only be undertaken when it is absolutely necessary and there are no other alternatives available. However, it is recognised that due to the nature of the business of the University, there will be situations where individuals may have to undertake lone working.

Lone working can be defined as all work undertaken alone where the risk to the individual may be increased, either by the work itself or by the lack of on-hand support should something go wrong. **The definition is not therefore intended to cover normal, low risk, day-to-day activities carried out during normal working hours in low risk environments where employees are left alone as part of their daily routine.** It does however cover lone working in remote or isolated areas during normal working hours.

It is important to note that lone working can occur at any time and is not restricted to activities in non-core hours or when buildings are closed.

In order to determine whether the lone working activity can be conducted and, where necessary, what additional controls are required the following process must be followed. This is detailed in the Lone Working Flowchart which can be found at

<http://www4.rgu.ac.uk/hr/healthsafety/page.cfm?pge=95190>. In brief:

- Determine if the activity has been previously risk assessed
- If yes, re-visit the risk assessment to ensure that there are no additional risks introduced due to undertaking the task alone
- If no, then undertake a risk assessment for the activity taking into consideration any additional risks introduced due to lone working
- Dependant on the outcome of the risk assessment, there are three possible scenarios:
  - Work is not permitted as the residual risk is unacceptable
  - Work can be conducted by a lone worker provided additional specific controls are implemented prior to work beginning

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<sup>1</sup> Lone Working and Out of Hours Access Policy Statement

<http://www4.rgu.ac.uk/hr/healthsafety/page.cfm?pge=95190>

- Work can be conducted by a lone worker with no additional controls
- If additional controls are required then these must be implemented and recorded on an updated risk assessment form prior to the activity commencing
- If the proposed lone working activity is within the scope of this policy and is to be conducted outwith core hours (0700-1800, Monday to Friday) then the out of core hours work procedure must be followed<sup>2</sup>. This includes the completion of the lone worker approval form and supporting statement, detailing of specific control measures and authorisation by the Head of School/Department or nominated deputy
- In order to assist Schools/Departments in managing lone working it is strongly advised that Schools/Departments complete a list of authorised activities for those individuals who regularly undertake lone working. This Lone Working – Authorised Activities Form<sup>3</sup> should be accompanied by the updated risk assessments highlighting the controls appropriate for lone working.
- Irrespective of work activity the additional controls must highlight what arrangements they have for contacting a named individual in the event of emergency situations

The assessments and authorisations for an instance of lone working are bound by risk rather than time. A risk assessment relating to an activity involving lone working may be valid for weeks or months providing that the risks involved in the activity and the associated control measures in place do not change. If the risks or control measures associated with an activity change then the assessment must be reviewed to reflect the new circumstances.

It is expected that no undergraduate student will work alone in a laboratory/workshop environment. The exception to this is where undergraduate students access a workshop to use hand tools and power to all other equipment is isolated.

### **Restricted Activities**

There are certain activities where the residual risks are such that lone working is not permitted. These are:

- Maintenance/inspection work involving moving machinery which is not locked off or isolated
- Work with equipment powered off a 3-phase electricity supply or other high energy source which is not locked off and de-energised

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<sup>2</sup> Out of Core Hours Work Procedure

<http://www4.rgu.ac.uk/hr/healthsafety/page.cfm?pge=95190>

<sup>3</sup> Lone Working – Authorised Activities Form

<http://www4.rgu.ac.uk/hr/healthsafety/page.cfm?pge=95190>

- Work within confined spaces
- Work within deep excavations
- Maintenance work on or near to asbestos containing materials
- Work involving chemicals with the following risk phrases: R1-6, 12-17, 19, 23, 26-28, 32, 34-35, 39-45, 49
- Work with lasers of Class 3b and above (except those fully enclosed and interlocked)
- Work at height above 1.5m (including ladders and MEWPS) but excluding properly constructed platforms with secure handrails and toe boards
- Roof work outwith a secure handrail system

### **Additional Controls**

As part of the lone working procedure additional controls may be required after re-visiting the existing or conducting a new risk assessment. These will depend on the individual circumstances but could include:

- The use of Guardian Angel type systems,
- Pre-arranged phone calls to a named, informed contact, Use of hand tools only,
- Use of additional screens,
- Arranging appropriate levels of first aid cover, etc.