



TOWN OF OXFORD POLICY

NUMBER: 2022 – Health and
Safety

PAGES: 5

DEPARTMENT: Occupational Health & Safety

TITLE: Working Alone Policy

MINUTES REFERENCED DATE: 03 October 2022 – Special Town Council Meeting

1ST REVISION DATE:

CURRENT REVISION DATE: 03 October 2022

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the precautions which must be followed when working alone in any facility and/or job site within the Town of Oxford.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and agents who engage in any activities requiring them to work alone.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 High Risk Activities – Activities where the potential for the occurrence of incidents or injuries is deemed to be highly likely and where the severity of the injury or incident will bring serious consequences. High risk activities include the following:

- Working from heights
- Working in confined spaces (under current OHS regulations in Canada, a worker is NOT permitted to work alone in a confined space).
- Work including lockout/tagout
- Working with electricity
- Working with hazardous substances or materials
- Working with material under high pressure
- Working where there is a possible threat of violence
- Working in isolation from first aid services or immediate/emergency assistance

3.2 Low Risk Activities – Activities where the potential for the occurrence of incidents and injuries is deemed to be highly unlikely and where the severity of an incident or injury is generally thought not to have serious consequences.

3.3 Risk Assessment – Individually and collectively, supervisors and workers are required to assess the conditions or circumstances under which an employee may be working alone to determine the risks, the

level of risk and prevention measures required to reduce those identified risks to acceptable levels. A critical part of the risk assessment is the determination of emergency assistance procedures.

3.4 Working Alone – Individuals are working alone when they are by themselves in an office, vehicle, workshop, production area, field site or any other area/building or place where work is being done within or for the Town of Oxford. Assistance, in the event of an injury, illness or emergency, is not readily available to the to the individual in these cases.

3.5 Emergency Assistance – A means of communicating to gain assistance in the event of an emergency involving an incident or serious injury, illness, or threat of violence.

3.6 After Hours – The period when “normal” weekday or shift operations cease.

3.7 Field Work – Field work consists of work activities conducted for the purpose of deliveries & pickup of materials, study, research, training and/or production related activities that are undertaken by the staff of the Town of Oxford at locations outside the Town of Oxford.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 In order for this Working Alone policy and procedures to be effective, they will be implemented with reason and diligence. To achieve this, respective responsibilities have been defined to ensure those who can positively impact on the potential risks of working alone are aware of their responsibilities and have the knowledge and skill to effectively implement working alone guidelines.

4.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.2.1 Identify risks or hazards associated with the work to be performed or the environment where the work is to be done.

4.2.2 Conduct and document a risk/hazard assessment for each different (specific) type of work or work location that can be deemed to be a working alone situation.

4.2.3 Communicate the results of the risk assessment to all affected workers and others conducting similar work.

4.2.4 Provide scenario-specific written working alone procedures/work instructions in their area(s) of responsibility to eliminate or minimize identified risks.

4.2.5 Develop effective methods of communication for those who require emergency assistance, depending on the specific **work, location** of the work and **nature** of the work (e.g., cell phones, radio, pager, etc.). When electronic devices are not feasible, an effective contact system must be established (e.g., check-in procedures, periodic site visits, worker being required to check in after the completion of specific tasks). The length of time a worker may be out of contact with a supervisor (the **frequency** of regular communications) must be based on the results from the risk assessment.

4.2.6 Document when working alone is permitted and/or prohibited and ensure this is effectively communicated to all workers as well as being updated on a regular basis (e.g., annually, semi-annually).

4.2.7 Schedule, whenever possible, potentially hazardous work for times when supervisors and appropriate assistance will be available.

4.2.8 Provide adequate staffing (e.g., buddy system) for potentially hazardous tasks performed at off-hours or in remote locations.

4.2.9 Ensure that all lone workers have valid first aid training.

4.3 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.3.1 Participate in the Working Alone risk assessment and risk management decisions with the supervisor.

4.3.2 Follow safe work practices outlined in safe work procedures.

4.3.3 Maintain regular communication as directed by supervisors.

4.3.4 Ensure valid first aid training is in place.

4.4 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.4.1 Monitor applicable legislation to ensure the Working Alone policy is up to date with Canadian OHS legislation and incorporates any new or revised regulatory requirements.

4.4.2 Provide consultation to all supervisory staff within the Town of Oxford, in the development of departmental/divisional and site-specific Working Alone plans.

4.4.3 Coordinate the development of departmental/divisional and site-specific Working Alone plans.

4.4.4 Develop, modify, revise, and update as required, a standard Working Alone Checklist to be used as the basis for documentation of directive information concerning the specific Working Alone requirements.

4.4.5 Audit to determine the effectiveness of the Working Alone policy within the Town of Oxford.

5.0 WORKING ALONE PROHIBITED:

5.1 There are certain situations where working alone cannot and shall not be permitted within the Town of Oxford. Working alone shall be prohibited when working in areas of:

- **Confined Space Entry**
- **Electrical Work**
- **Trenches/Tunnels/Manholes**
- **Risk of Drowning**
- **Fall Arrest Equipment or Scaffolding**
- **Machine and power tools that could cause a critical injury such as a chain saw, table saw, etc.**
- **Quick acting, acutely toxic material as described by the corresponding Safety Data Sheet (WHMIS Health Hazard)**
- **The use of supplied air respiratory equipment or self-contained breathing apparatus**

- Use of a vehicle, crane, or other mobile equipment, where the operator does not have a clear, full view of the intended path of travel.

6.0 COMMUNICATION

The Working Alone policy shall include any of the following, where practicable, to ensure the most practical and effective means of communications:

- 6.0.1 Portable or cellular telephone
- 6.0.2 Walkie-Talkie or Two-Way Radio System
- 6.0.3 Personal alarm or pager
- 6.0.4 "Buddy" system
- 6.0.5 Check-in system and requirement for updating an individual's status while working alone, or
- 6.0.6 Any other safe method that may be considered most effective to the specific department's/area's safe operations.
- 6.1.0 Each Working Alone scenario shall use these communication options, either singularly, or in Combination in the development of a site/scenario-specific Working Alone communication plan.

7.0 GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING WORK ALONE RISK ASSESSMENTS

7.1 There are several scenarios within the Town of Oxford that call for jobs with Working Alone situations. It is essential that employees and their supervisors work together to develop safe work procedures. It is mandatory that the working conditions or circumstances that present a high level of safety risk, be assessed so the probability of an incident or injury can be minimized. Supervisors and employees shall evaluate working alone assignments on a case-by-case basis and shall consider the following risk factors for working alone:

- 7.1.1 Tasks and hazards involved in the work to be performed
- 7.1.2 Consequences resulting from a "worse case" scenario. This will be accomplished by asking the question, "What if?"
- 7.1.3 Likelihood for other persons to be in the area
- 7.1.4 Possibility that a critical injury or incident could prevent an employee from calling for help or leaving the workplace
- 7.1.5 Emergency response time
- 7.1.6 Employee's training and experience
- 7.1.7 Worker's physical handicaps or any pre-existing medical conditions
- 7.1.8 Frequency of job supervision, if at all
- 7.1.9 The time, shift and location of the work to be performed
- 7.2.0 Whether the employee is accustomed to working alone

7.2 Supervisors shall provide written Working Alone safety plans, for scenarios listed in Section 7.1. Safety plans should include the following:

- 7.2.1 Location of work
- 7.2.2 Duration of work including specific time of return of solo employee
- 7.2.3 Specific work to be performed and identification of associated hazards

- 7.2.4 Consideration for "worst case" scenario
- 7.2.5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required
- 7.2.6 Name of contact person
- 7.2.7 Likelihood that an injury would prevent the employee from communicating with the contact person.
- 7.2.8 Frequency of checking in, either in person or by two-way communication (e.g., radio, cell phone)
- 7.2.9 Methods of communication (e.g., cell phone, radio, pager).
 - 7.2.9.1 Emergency Plan
 - 7.2.9.2 Procedures to eliminate or minimize the identified risks (e.g., buddy system)
 - 7.2.9.3 Confirmation where and when working alone is permitted.

7.3 Supervisors must review working alone safety plans with their affected employees with a particular emphasis on safe work procedures and the provision of assistance to employees at risk due to infrequent supervision, intermittent communication, or physical isolation. Complete Working Alone plans must be kept on file and be available for review. Written safety plans should be reviewed and updated at least **annually**.

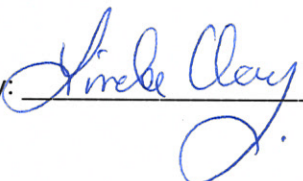
7.4 The designated contact person shall be responsible for the following:

- 7.4.1 Review of the work plan
- 7.4.2 Maintaining regular contact with the solo employee as prescribed by the work plan
- 7.4.3 Initiate the emergency plan if necessary

7.5 Communication must be maintained between the person working alone and the designated contact person through two-way communication via radio, cell phone, direct contact, or other effective means. If direct contact through scheduled check-in is the method of communication selected, the person working alone must have a method of signalling for help in the event of an emergency.

7.6 If direct contact through scheduled check-in is the method of communication selected, the designated contact person will check-in with the solo employee on a frequency determined by the approved working alone plan. If contact cannot be made with the solo employee during a scheduled check-in, the emergency plan shall be initiated.

7.7 Should anything change in the course of the work being done, the employee working alone shall notify their supervisor immediately of the change and the work is to be modified accordingly as per the direction of my supervisor.

Originated by:  Date: Oct 3, 2022

