



# Working Alone or in Isolation Program

## Purpose

The purpose of the University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine (UBC FoM) Working Alone or in Isolation Program is to provide information on working alone or in isolation as described within the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR). It is also to implement a system which requires regular check-ins to ensure the health and safety of employees who are working alone or in isolation.

## Scope

This program applies to all UBC FoM employees (faculty, staff, and paid students) working in laboratory or administrative settings who have been assigned to work alone or in isolation under the [OHSR Section 4.20.1-4.23](#). This includes employees working at off-campus sites including hospital sites, partner institutions and their homes as part of a remote work program. For UBC FoM employees that do not work in laboratory or administrative settings, contact [fom.safety@ubc.ca](mailto:fom.safety@ubc.ca).

## Regulations

WorkSafeBC OHSR Working Alone or in Isolation Section [4.20.1- 4.23](#).

## Definitions

### Administrative Controls

- The modification of work processes or activities to minimize risk

### Emergency Contact

- Refers to the person responsible for checking in on a worker working alone or in isolation. In most cases, this is the supervisor

### Engineering Controls

- The modification of the physical work environment to minimize risk

### Regular Working Hours

- The hours in which there are people available at UBC to help in the event of an incident. These hours normally fall between 8:30 am and 4:30pm. Should a department have modified office hours, they should be noted in Appendix B: Check-in and Response Procedure for Personnel Working Alone or in Isolation



#### Risk Assessment

- The process where hazards are identified, their risk evaluated, and controls for the risk are determined to eliminate the hazard or minimize the risk

#### Supervisor

Refers to the person directly responsible for overseeing the tasks of the worker

#### Worker

- Refers to all employees of UBC including faculty, staff, and paid students

#### 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

#### Workplace

- The location where the work is performed

## Responsibilities

#### Supervisor

- Identify all workers who work alone or in isolation to ensure they know the associated risks
- Complete the eligibility for personnel working alone document to ensure any potential hazards do not preclude them from working alone (**see Appendix A**).
- Identify and document contact information for a check-in designate for each worker who works alone or in isolation (**see Appendix B**)
- FoM Health & Safety has conducted a risk assessment to identify the risks associated with potential hazards. If working alone is permissible, the maximum check-in interval for laboratory settings is 3 hours; the maximum check-in interval for office settings is 4 hours. Time intervals for checking a worker's well-being must be developed in consultation with the worker assigned to work alone or in isolation, and should be based on site-specific hazards
- Implement controls using the [hierarchy of controls](#) to minimize the risk due to the hazard
- Eliminate working alone or in isolation in the workplace by ensuring others are in the vicinity, where possible
- Ensure safe work procedures are documented



- Ensure proper training has been provided to workers prior to commencing work (e.g. safe work procedures, use of equipment or tools, personal protective equipment requirements, identifying and reporting hazards, etc.) and that the training has been documented
- Ensure workers have access to and understanding of any required documentation such as manuals, Safety Data Sheets (SDS), etc.
- Educate workers on emergency procedures, contacts and numbers (e.g. First Aid). If emergency contact information is not posted at the workplace, provide the worker with a copy to carry with them. The worker must know what to do in case of emergency/injury
- Participate in the development of a documented check-in procedure
- Implement the documented check-in procedure by training worker(s) and check-in designate, prior to commencing work alone or in isolation
- Supervise the workplace and ensure that the documented check-in procedure is followed
- When uncertainties arise, consult with the applicable Faculty of Medicine Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee(s) (FoM JOHSCs) on the documented check-in procedure

#### Worker

- Communicate any unsafe conditions to your supervisor
- Consider disclosing any pre-existing medical conditions that could affect ability to work alone
- Understand and follow the documented check-in procedure
- Time intervals for checking a worker's well-being must be developed in consultation with the supervisor who assigned the worker to work alone or in isolation
- Ensure the communication tool (e.g. telephone, radio, MS Teams, email, SMS) is operable and capable of completing the check-in procedure
  - Archive electronic check-ins or fill out Check-In Record (Appendix C)
- Follow all job procedures and use proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- If you have questions about the program, discuss with and provide input to your supervisor

#### Check-in Designate

- Understand and follow the documented check-in procedure
- Perform and record or archive check-ins
- Ensure the communication tool (e.g. telephone, radio, MS Teams, email, SMS) is operable and capable of completing the check-in procedure

#### Faculty of Medicine Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (FoM JOHSC) Representatives

- Review the completed eligibility for working alone and documented check-in procedure, ensuring the check-in interval is appropriate
- Participate in the review of the Working Alone Program
- Ensure appropriate revisions are made to the Working Alone Program as a result of any incidents/accidents associated to the procedures



## Training Requirements

Minimum training required:

- [Mandatory Training Courses](#)
- [Job Specific Training with documentation](#)
- Both the Worker and the Emergency contact must be trained in the written procedure for checking the worker's well-being
- Workers have access to and are familiar with UBC safety and emergency procedures and contact information

## General Procedure

These steps are to be completed by the supervisor:

1. Identify all workers working alone
2. For each worker identified in Step 1, complete the Eligibility for Working Alone (**Appendix A**).
3. If working alone is permitted, Faculty of Medicine Health & Safety has determined that the maximum check-in interval for laboratory settings is 3 hours, and the maximum check-in interval for office settings is 4 hours.

NOTE: The eligibility for working alone should be based on what is reasonably anticipated for that workplace or work activity. A single form can be completed for either one worker or a group of workers who perform the exact same tasks; however, if at any time, there is a change in location, timing, equipment, environment or any other factor that could affect the worker's safety, a new form will be required and changes to the check-in procedure may be necessary.

4. Complete the documented check-in procedure (**Appendix B: Check-in Procedure**) after determining eligibility.

NOTE: As stated within the OHSR, high risk activities require shorter check-in time intervals.

5. Approve a check-in designate. Ideally, the supervisor is the one checking in on their workers; however, other systems can be put in place

NOTE: The preferred method for checking in on workers is visual or two-way voice contact.

6. Consult with the [FoM JOHSCs](#). The JOHSCs are to review the completed risk assessment and documented check-in procedure, ensuring the check-in interval is appropriate
7. Ensure there are documented training records indicating that the worker has been trained in the task/procedure that will be carried out while working alone or in isolation

NOTE: It is strongly recommended that handling of hazardous materials or operation of hazardous equipment while working alone be prohibited.

8. Train all applicable workers and check-in designates on the documented check-in procedure
9. Maintain records and documents as stated under the "Review and Retention" Section



## Working Alone or in Isolation Procedure Template #1: For situations where WorkAlone Feature of UBC Safe App IS used

*Note: This procedure applies if you are using the WorkAlone Feature in the UBC Safe App and the worker working alone is on UBC Vancouver Campus. Do not modify the steps in this procedure as this is how the app functions.*

1. Conduct a [Risk Assessment](#) to determine the risks associated with working alone or in in isolation and check-in time interval. The check-in interval is: Fill in the blank
2. The Worker and Emergency Contact review the [WorkAlone Feature Step by Step Guide](#)
3. The Worker enters the following details into the WorkAlone Feature located in the UBC Safe App in order to start a WorkAlone Session:
  - a. Worker Name
  - b. Worker Phone Number
  - c. Primary Emergency Contact Name (ideally the worker's supervisor)
  - d. Primary Emergency Contact Number
  - e. Building Name
  - f. Building Address
  - g. Room Number
  - h. List Identified Hazards at the location
  - i. Other Important Location Details
  - j. How often the App check in on you? (Based on the risk assessment from step (1))
  - k. Duration of Working Alone session
  - l. Secondary Emergency Contact Name
  - m. Secondary Emergency Contact Number
4. Upon successfully starting a session, the Worker is encouraged to contact their emergency contact to verify that they received a text indicating that the worker has begun their working alone session.
5. The Worker will be notified by push notifications from the WorkAlone Feature to check-in at the frequency they have selected as per the risk assessment findings.
6. If the Worker does not check in, the WorkAlone Feature will notify the Primary Emergency Contact via a phone call and text message and instruct them to make contact with the worker to check on their wellbeing
7. The Emergency Contact will contact the worker directly to verify that the worker is okay
  - a. If contact is made, and the worker is okay no further steps have to be taken.
  - b. If contact is made, and the worker is in distress or unwell, the Primary Emergency Contact will call Campus Security and inform them of this.
  - c. If the Primary Emergency Contact cannot make contact with the worker, they will contact Campus Security



- d. If the Primary Emergency Contact misses the alert notifying them that the worker has not checked in, the WorkAlone Feature will notify Campus Security
- 8. If there is a serious incident or immediate assistance is required, the “Panic” button can be used which will immediately contact Campus Security

**NOTE:** Campus Security will follow their internal procedures upon being contacted.

A record of all automatic notifications and whether they were acknowledged or not will be recorded in the WorkAlone Dashboard accessible by Campus Security.

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Supervisor	Supervisor (Print Name)
Emergency Contact	Emergency Contact (Print Name)
Worker	Worker (Print Name)

### References and Resources

- WorkSafeBC OHSR [4.20.1- 4.23](#) and OHSR Guidelines [4.20.1 - 4.22.2-2](#)
- WorkSafeBC [Working Alone: A Handbook for Small Businesses](#)
- [Safety & Risk Services](#)
- [Emergency and Safety Contacts Poster](#)
- [First Aid Poster](#)
- [Working Alone Risk Assessment and Procedure Template for Remote Work](#)
- [UBC Safe App](#)



## Review and Retention

The Working Alone or in Isolation Program shall be reviewed annually by each of the FoM JOHSCs. Upon review, any necessary updates will be made to ensure that the program and related procedures continue to be relevant and provide accurate/appropriate safety measures for all workers affected.

The supervisor must retain access to the following documents:

- Most Recent version of the Working Alone or in Isolation Program
- Documented Check-in Procedure(s)
- Working Alone or in Isolation Form(s)
- Check-in Record(s)
  - Check-in records may be stored digitally as long as they remain accessible. A handwritten record template can be found in **Appendix C**.



## Appendix A: Eligibility for Personnel Working Alone or in Isolation<sup>1</sup>

Before personnel may work alone or in isolation, a risk assessment must be completed. Faculty of Medicine Health & Safety has conducted a risk assessment and developed standard eligibility criteria. The responsible supervisor must use this criteria for each person, who will be working alone. A single form can be completed for either one worker or a group of workers who perform the exact same tasks; however, if at any time, there is a change in location, timing, equipment, environment or any other factor that could affect the worker's safety, a new form will be required and changes to the check-in procedure may be necessary. Save a copy of the completed form with the check in procedure for your records. Review of this form must be done when there is a change to work protocols, a change in the worker's abilities, or an incident.

**Note: If the person planning to work alone is working with public with a potential for violence, the [UBC Workplace Violence Prevention Risk Assessment](#) tool must be completed**

### A: Serious Risk of Personal Harm

An answer of 'yes' to any of the following means that personnel may **not** work alone.

1. Does the work involve hazardous materials in quantity or concentration that could cause serious injury or render the user unconscious? (I.e., concentrated acids/bases/toxics, highly volatile hazardous materials or explosive materials)
2. Does the work involve risk of overexertion?
3. Does the work involve changing of compressed gas tanks, transporting, and/or transferring of liquid nitrogen?
4. Is the person planning to work alone
  - a. Working on a project where they are not listed as a study team member or authorized user?
  - b. A volunteer or a novice lab member with limited experience?
  - c. Missing required UBC Safety & Risk Services training courses?
  - d. At increased personal risk due to health status, known medical condition or communication ability?
5. Does the work include any other activity with a reasonable risk of serious harm not listed above?

### B: Risk of Personal Harm

An answer of 'yes' to any of the following means that personnel working at this task alone must check in before commencing working alone and once work is completed, and request the service of check-ins at a maximum of every three hours.

1. Does the work involve hazardous materials (biological, chemical, radioisotopes, etc.)?
2. Does the work involve electrical shock hazards or motorized blades?
3. Does the work involve sharps with a reasonable risk of injury?
4. Does the work involve proximity to hazardous materials, including items stored in the laboratory that could be accidentally hit or spilled during work?

### C: Low Risk Activities

If none of the above apply, then the worker may work alone or in isolation with check-ins at a maximum of every 4 hours.

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<sup>1</sup> Modified and adopted with permission from the Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health Local Safety Team

Prepared by: Faculty of Medicine Health & Safety

Approved by: Faculty of Medicine Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

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# Appendix B: Check-in and Response Procedure for Personnel Working Alone or in Isolation

Once completed, a copy of this form is to be provided to the Worker, the Supervisor and the Check-in Designate.

1. WORKER INFORMATION		
Note: in case of an emergency, this information can be used to find, or send assistance to, the worker.		
Worker's Full Name:		
<u>Work Location:</u>		<u>Contact number(s):</u>
Building Name:	Work Tel:	
Building Address:	Work Cell:	
Location(s) where work will be done:	Home:	
	Private Cell:	
Description of Worker's vehicle and license plate number (optional)		
Worker's Emergency Contact:	Contact Information:	
Worker's Supervisor:	Contact Information:	
2. CHECK-IN DESIGNATE INFORMATION		
Primary Check-in Designate Name:		
Contact numbers	Work / office:	
	Work / Priv. Cell:	
	Home:	
Alternate Check-in Designate Name (if primary is unavailable):		
Contact numbers	Work / office:	
	Work / Priv. Cell:	
	Home:	
3. CHECK-IN PROCEDURE		
Check-in Plan:	Please check the box of the check-in plan to be applied: <input type="checkbox"/> Worker will check-in with Check-in Designate (at set time intervals) <input type="checkbox"/> Check-in Designate will check-in on the Worker (at set time intervals)	
Check-in Method	Please check the box of the check-in method: <input type="checkbox"/> By text messaging <input type="checkbox"/> By telephone; specific tel. number(s) to be used: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> By social media; type: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative method: _____	



Check-in Frequency	Please check the box of the check-in frequency: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> At the start of each work period in isolation (mandatory) <input type="checkbox"/> Every three (3) hours, for laboratory type work <input type="checkbox"/> Every four (4) hours, for office-type work <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative frequency: _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> At the end of each work period in isolation (mandatory)
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**4. PROCEDURE FOR CHECK-IN FAILURE**

NOTE: If the worker is not available at the determined check-in time, the check-in designate will attempt to call the worker within 5 minutes of the predetermined check in time. If the check-in designate does not make contact with the worker, they will make another attempt within 10 minutes of the predetermined time.

**If the check-in designate is unable to make contact with the worker after the second attempt, they will :**

1. Call UBC Campus Security at 604-822-2222 (or equivalent if the work location is off UBC-V campus) and provide the following information about the worker: name of worker, location, phone number, last time of contact, and potential hazards.

If the work location is off UBC-V campus, indicate the equivalent name and number that will be called here:

2. UBC Campus Security (or equivalent) will attempt to call the worker’s mobile number. If there is no answer, they will visit the work location and check in on the worker in-person.
3. UBC Campus Security (or equivalent) will call the check-in designate and inform them if they were able to locate or make contact with the worker or not.
4. If UBC Campus Security (or equivalent) was unable to locate or make contact with the worker, the check-in designate will contact the worker’s emergency contact to gather further information (this must be done delicately so as not to cause alarm to the family).
5. If the worker was not located or contacted through communications with their emergency contact, the check-in designate will liaise with UBC Campus Security (or equivalent) to determine if it is necessary to call 911 and request help.

**5. PROCEDURE VALIDATION - to be done at regular intervals.**

I have reviewed or have participated in the development of this written check-in procedure, have been trained on the procedure, and understand its purpose and content. I have verified that all of the above information is up-to-date and accurate.

Signature of Worker:

Date:

Signature of Contact Designate:

Date:

Signature or Supervisor:

Date:

**Note: If this check-in procedure applies to several workers, please ensure all workers understand and sign this document.**



## Appendix C: Check-in Record Template

Check-in Designate Name:

CHECK-IN RECORD				
Employee Name:		Location of work:		
Check-in Intervals:		Shift Start: _____ am/pm Shift End: _____ am/pm		
Date	Check-in Time	Method of Communication	Check-in Designate Initials	Comments