



## Lone and Remote Working Policy

Owner:	Health and Safety Office
Approver (Date):	Council (28 June 2010)
Review due date:	May 2025
Current Version:	May 2022 (Version 5.0)
Update history:	<p>Originated: February 2010</p> <p>Previous Revision: June 2019</p> <p>Recommended by Health and Safety Committee: February 2017; May 2019</p> <p>Approved by Council: March 2013 February 2017 June 2019</p> <p>Approved by Health, Safety &amp; Welfare Committee: 11 May 2022 (Minor amendments)</p>
Document Type:	Policy
Classification:	Public

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# Lone and Remote Working Policy

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## 1. Introduction

This policy sets out how the University of Roehampton will manage the risks associated with lone and remote working. The policy reflects the University’s commitment to protect the health and safety of its staff and students and must be referred to when conducting risk assessments for work involving lone working on and off the campus.

This policy supports the University Health and Safety Policy and provides guidance to all line managers responsible for staff who may work on their own.

This policy applies to University employees who may work alone or in remote situations on or off campus or who work outside core working hours on campus. It also applies to any students undertaking fieldwork, surveys, interviews or practical/experimental projects without direct supervision and who are exposed to a significant risk because they are working alone or in remote situations. The University Health and Safety Office provides competent support to the University and is responsible for ensuring policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and for the provision of information and training to staff.

## 2. Legislation

There is no specific legislation on lone or remote working but there is a general duty on employers under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HASAWA) to ensure the health and safety of employees, so far as is reasonably practicable, and where working alone or in remote situations is identified, [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) (MHSWR) require employers to assess the associated risks and put in place suitable and sufficient control measures to mitigate the risks to ensure lone workers are not at any additional risk than other employees.

Although there is no overall statutory prohibition on working alone, there are some circumstances when there is a legal requirement for at least two people to be involved in the work e.g. work at or near live electrical cables.

## **Key Legislation**

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999

Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977

The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

### **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees and students who work alone or in remote situations are not exposed to risks to their health and safety, and to outline the precautions that should be considered in the course of risk assessment.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to ensure:

- Lone and remote workers are identified
- The risks inherent in working alone and remote situations are assessed and suitable precautionary measures taken
- There is a local safe system of work which:
  - Records and tracks the whereabouts of lone and remote workers
  - Follows an agreed system for identifying when a lone or remote worker deviates from their expected activities
  - Contains a procedure for responding to a reported or suspected emergency involving a lone or remote worker
  - Identifies when lone or remote working is no longer appropriate

## 4. Application

This policy applies to all employees, including temporary and contract workers who are provided through an agency, and to students who are undertaking any fieldwork or practical/experimental projects during their academic programme without direct supervision. It is not intended to apply to employees who work in an office on their own during core working hours, unless their working alone presents a significant risk, it is also not intended to apply to students residing in halls of residence. Where relevant, departments are required to have in place local arrangements that comply with this policy.

## 5. Communication

It is important that all line managers ensure that this policy is communicated effectively to all their staff, and that all academic supervisors of students to whom this policy applies ensure that they also communicate this policy effectively to them.

## 6. Definitions

**A lone worker** can be anyone who works by themselves. A lone worker, for the purpose of this guidance, is defined as a member of staff or student who, for significant periods of their working or research time, is engaged in activities which places them in a situation without direct contact with other staff/students, or without direct supervision, during an activity that places that person at significant risk of exposure to a hazard or number of hazards.

**A remote worker** is any person that undertakes an activity in a situation where they are separated by significant distance or travelling time from shelter, medical or police/security assistance, or where communication links are difficult or do not exist. Remote workers include groups that meet this criteria but it is also possible for a person to be a lone and remote worker.

All on-campus lone working activities outside of core working hours must be notified to security by the person concerned. This is particularly important in the interests of personal safety and building security.

**Normal working hours** are as defined in individual employee contracts and may vary depending upon the role. Core working hours for the University can be taken as falling between 0700 and 2100hrs on weekdays.

**Out of hours** is anytime outside of the core working hours for the University, including weekends, public holidays and University closure days.

**Hazardous areas** are areas where an employee or student may be exposed to hazards that are considered greater than those normally encountered within working environments such as offices or teaching spaces. These may include, for example, field work, laboratories or workshops.

**A hazardous task** is a task where the hazards encountered within the task are considered to be greater than normal e.g. working at height, working with electricity, exposure to violent or aggressive behaviour etc.

## 7. Categories of Work

The level of risk will be determined from completing a risk assessment.

### **Low-risk activities**

Should only be undertaken by persons authorised to do so by their line manager or supervisor who conducted the risk assessment with the employee. Work falling into this category is deemed to be safe to be undertaken by lone workers (e.g. general office work during core hours, employee carrying out general maintenance activities).

### **Medium-risk activities**

Should only be undertaken if there is at least one other person present either in the same space or an adjoining space. The person should be competent at the task or activity and familiar with emergency procedures.

### **High-risk activities**

Can only be undertaken if there is at least one other person present in the same space, who is competent at the task or activity and familiar with emergency procedures. Suitable emergency arrangements, such as radio communication and immediate access to a first aid kit or rescue equipment, may be necessary.

### **Laboratories**

In the case of laboratories, only authorised persons may enter at any time. Authorised persons would include laboratory employees, students, technicians or visiting researchers and persons of equivalent status who are:

- Directly associated with the work in the laboratories
- Familiar with the layout of the building
- Familiar with the emergency procedures
- Have an approved risk assessment identifying lone working as a risk and detailing the corresponding control measures, including which specified tasks are approved during lone working
- Have completed any necessary laboratory safety induction training
- Sign in /out with Security Reception during out of hours

Local policies, procedures and any generic risk assessments in place to cover specifically lone working in the laboratories should be adhered to at all times. Students are required to have lone working risks identified and agreed, in advance with their supervisor, of what is permitted with and without their direct supervision.

## **8. Responsibilities**

### **The Health and Safety Office**

1. Will provide advice and training where required on the implementation of this policy, assist with lone and remote working risk assessments and safe systems of work.
2. Review this policy and associated arrangements every 3 years or in the case of an incident occurring where a review may be required.

### **Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments**

Shall ensure that:

1. All employees, students and visitors in their departments are aware of this policy and any local arrangements for lone working.
2. A risk assessment of lone/remote working for their departments is carried out and that a record is made of this, with any control measures that have been identified implemented accordingly.

### **Line Managers/Managers**

With responsibility for employees who work alone or in remote situations will:

1. Ensure that lone and remote working is considered in all risk assessments carried out in their area of responsibility.
2. Carry out a risk assessment with the employee(s) to identify and control risks associated with lone/remote working, based on the findings of the risk assessment.
3. Avoid lone working wherever possible.
4. Draft the appropriate local department policy/procedure/arrangements for working alone or in remote situations. This may include requirements specified by the University's insurance policy.
5. Communicate this policy to all their staff.
6. Check that appropriate precautions are being taken in accordance with the suggested control measures to reduce risks.
7. Ensure that the necessary records are kept e.g. copies of risk assessments on lone/remote working, documented procedure to be followed by lone or remote workers, communication arrangements, supervision etc.
8. Carry out a safety training needs analysis of lone or remote workers within their area of work; ensure all relevant staff receive core health and safety training.
9. Complete accident reports on behalf of employees or others that are unable to report the accident, incident or dangerous occurrence themselves. Telephone the Health and Safety Office immediately if an accident/incident involving an employee working alone appears to come under RIDDOR.

### **Academic Supervisors/Principal Investigators**

With responsibility for students who may work alone or in remote situations will:

1. Apply all of the measures detailed above for line managers with respect to their students.

## **Employees and Students**

Shall ensure that:

1. Medium and high risk lone/remote working is avoided wherever possible (outside of a normal office environment).
2. They identify any activity carried out by them which will involve medium and high risk lone/remote working; and
3. Comply with any precautionary measures including guidelines laid down by managers such as a 'buddy system'.

Employees undertaking academic research must consider the hazards and risks associated with lone/remote working during the study, research or in any field work.

## **Risk Assessment**

All Lone/remote working and normal work activities undertaken outside of core working hours must be subject to a risk assessment to consider the hazards. The assessment should be carried out by a line manager or supervisor. The Risk assessment should decide the right level of monitoring/supervision of lone/remote workers and those who habitually work outside core working hours. They must also identify high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present.

The risk assessment must consider the following:

- The individual's ability to carry out their activities safely on their own in their environment
- The potential for the individual to be subject to violence or aggression
- The individual's ability to request assistance or to withdraw safely from a dangerous situation
- The individual's fitness to carry out the work alone or in a remote situation
- The effectiveness of arrangements for dealing with sudden illness or emergencies
- Effects of social isolation
- Risks related to driving/travelling alone or in remote situations
- The suitability and effectiveness of any existing precautionary measures and emergency arrangements, including fire and emergency response

The above list is not exhaustive, each situation is different and individual hazards for those situations must be considered.

Examples of control measures are:

- Prevention of lone/remote working wherever possible
- Suitable training
- Suitable emergency equipment and emergency arrangements
- Adequate supervision
- Defined work activities including written safe systems of work

## **APPENDIX A RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

The risk assessment can be carried out using the University's standard risk assessment form but detailed below is a checklist of points to be covered. This list is not exhaustive and each situation can vary. Using the checklist will help you to determine whether lone working is acceptable within the activity you are risk assessing.

If you are unsure of what is required please seek advice and support from the Health and Safety Office in the first instance.

### **In the Workplace**

1. Does the workplace present a special hazard?
2. Is the access to, or exit from, the workplace safe?
3. Is the lighting and ventilation sufficient?
4. Will other adjacent processes and activities present a risk?
5. Is equipment safe and regularly maintained?
6. What risks will the worker be exposed to in the event of equipment failure?
7. Can substances and goods be handled safely?
8. Does the worker have the appropriate personal protective equipment and are they trained in its use?
9. Has the worker been trained to do the task properly?
10. Has the worker demonstrated their ability to do the task satisfactorily?
11. Is the worker medically fit to undertake the task?
12. Has the worker sufficient information about the job, equipment or substances?
13. Is cash being handled, will they be at a risk of violence?
14. Is the worker known to be reliable and seek help when they reach the limit of their knowledge or experience?
15. What is the appropriate level of supervision for the task?
16. What first aid provision is required?
17. How will you communicate with the worker to ensure their wellbeing?
18. What are the arrangements for the worker in the event of an emergency?

### **Some useful pointers for Managers/Supervisors**

- Carry out informal inspections of the workplace and access on a regular basis to make sure the workplace is safe and that people are working safely.
- Ask yourself how you would feel working there - would you feel safe?
- Check to make sure equipment is being maintained properly and records are kept.
- Make sure materials safety data sheets are available for all materials used and stored on the premises.
- Make sure risk assessments of all processes and activities are available for workers to refer to and that safe working procedures are available.
- Make sure you know workers are fully aware of local rules, especially those related to "working outside core hours".

- Periodically speak to those who work alone/remotely informally to find out if they have any concerns that can be dealt with easily.
- Make sure they know you do not want them to put themselves at risk. Ask them how the job could be made safer.
- Make sure you have a reliable system for contacting the lone/remote worker and for establishing they are unharmed – this could be by a call-in system, a tracking device, a mobile phone, satellite phone etc.
- Consider what emergency situations could arise and make sure you have procedures in place to cover them.

### **For home visits and meeting the public**

Have your lone workers:

1. Been fully trained in strategies for conflict diffusion?
2. Been briefed about the areas where they work, or will work?
3. Been made aware of attitudes, traits or mannerisms that can annoy clients?
4. Been given all available information about the client from all relevant agencies?
5. Understood the importance of previewing cases?
6. Left an itinerary?
7. Made plans to keep in contact with colleagues?
8. Included arrangements for using a pre-agreed code word or phrase in a text or telephone conversation to alert their supervisor if they are in peril and under duress?
9. The means to contact you – even when the switchboard may not be in use?
10. Got your home telephone number (and you theirs)?
11. A sound grasp of your organisation's preventative strategy?
12. Authority to arrange an accompanied visit, security escort, or use of a taxi?

Do your lone workers:

1. Know how to report accidents and incidents, including violence or threats of violence?
2. Appreciate the need for this procedure and use it?
3. Know your attitude to premature termination of interviews?
4. Know how to control and defuse potentially violent situations?
5. Appreciate their responsibility for their own safety?
6. Understand the provisions for support by your organisation?

**Further information and guidance is available on the [H&S staff portal](#): Home Visits & Working in the Community**