

Working alone can be required in a variety of roles in the workplace. It can present an increased risk of injury depending on the location, type of work or if the work involves interacting with the public. Working alone may carry similar risks to working in a small group or remote location, depending on the training or experience of group members and distance to emergency services.

### What factors increase the risk of injury when working alone?

Below are examples of factors that could increase the risk of injury when working alone. Which could occur in your workplace? Are there any others that may be relevant in your workplace?

Examples of factors that could increase the risk of injury when working alone include:

- working with hazardous materials, equipment or processes
- being a young or new worker
- travelling or driving
- working in confined spaces
- working in remote locations
- meeting clients away from the office
- working late at night
- working without emergency communication
- working where there is risk of drowning
- handling money or valuables

### What can be done to mitigate the hazards when working alone?

Below are several examples of mitigations that could help prevent injuries when working alone. Which could improve your workplace? Are there any others that may be useful in your workplace?

#### Required by law:

- employers must do hazard assessments and identify any hazards in their workplaces, including hazards when working alone
- employers must have safe work procedures for identified hazards that cannot be eliminated
- employers must offer training to employees on safe work procedures
- employers must have procedures for reporting, investigating, and documenting incidents and injuries, and offer training to employees on those procedures
- employers must ensure there is a trained and equipped standby person able to offer assistance when a worker is in a confined space
- workers are not permitted to work alone when operating a chainsaw to cut down and harvest trees

#### Additional controls:

Specific actions may be considered based on the hazard assessment in your workplace. For example:

- schedule to avoid leaving workers alone
- de-escalation training

#### Talk leader instructions:

- This is background information ONLY.
- Be sure to customize to your organization.
- Consider printing copies of this sheet for yourself and each participant.
- Lead a discussion with your workers about the materials on this sheet.
- Be sure to give real life examples whenever possible. Be open to questions.
- Conclude with a brief review of the main points or a summary based on the discussion.
- Fill in the name of your organization, location and the date on your sheet. Have each worker sign your sheet to confirm their attendance.
- File your sheet in your worker records to document the Safety Talk.

- communication systems like inReach, Spot or a satellite phone to allow workers to contact assistance whenever required
- record-keeping system to keep track of workers' whereabouts outside the workplace
- buddy system to ensure workers have support if required
- check-in procedures
- emergency response buttons
- procedures to restrict access to money and higher-value objects
- guest sign-in procedures
- design elements like lighting, lines of sight or barriers
- emergency plan based on hazards specific to a workplace

### Discussion questions:

1. How does your workplace assess hazards for employees who are working alone?
2. What actions can you take to prevent injury or illness for those working alone in your workplace?

### More information:

If you have questions about keeping safe when working alone, please contact:

- Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, 867-667-5450 or 1-800-661-0443 or [worksafe@gov.yk.ca](mailto:worksafe@gov.yk.ca)

#### Disclaimer

This resource has been prepared to help workplaces understand and comply with workplace health and safety laws. It is not legal advice and is not intended to replace the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act, S.Y. 2021, c.11* and *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations*.

Safety Talk record:

Print and complete this page or fill in electronically, then save as a record of your Safety Talk.

Comments/suggestions

Organization name

Safety Talk leader

Date

Safety Talk participants

print name

signature

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