

Health and Safety - Working Alone or in Isolation Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) To detail the process to ensure the safety of staff, students and contractors when they are required to work or study alone or in isolation.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) Victoria University (VU) managers who are responsible for staff, students and contractors who undertake work/study alone or in isolation.

(3) VU Staff, students and contractors who undertake work alone or in isolation.

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) Appropriate Manager: for this Procedure this term refers to the manager listed below:

- a. Staff: Head of Division/Department or College/Centre;
- b. Contractors: Victoria University on site contact;
- c. Students: Lecturer or Head of College/Centre.

(5) Emergency situation: refers to any situation where a person's health or safety is at risk. Examples include fire, bomb threat, intruders, physical assault, personal injury, sudden illness, accident etc.

(6) Employee: for this Procedure this term refers to staff, students and contractors as follows:

- a. Staff: any person who has a current employment contract with VU;
- b. Contractor: any person paid for providing services for VU that is not working under a current employment contract;
- c. Student: any person enrolled in any approved unit, course or degree offered by VU.

(7) Reasonably practicable: is a key concept in the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#) that is used to test whether risk control measures are appropriate. In determining what risk controls are 'reasonably practicable', the following factors must be considered:

- a. the likelihood of the hazard or risk concerned eventuating;
- b. the degree of harm that would result if the hazard or risk eventuated;
- c. what the person concerned knows, or ought to know, about the hazard or risk and any ways of eliminating or reducing the risk;
- d. the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or reduce the hazard or risk;

e. the cost of eliminating or reducing the hazard or risk.

(8) Remote: is defined as a location separated by time or distance from VU Security Services, essential services and/or other required services.

(9) Working After Hours: is work or study in any part of VU controlled workplaces that is done outside of the normal business hours. Normal business hours are specified for the individual buildings on the various VU campuses. Normal business hours are generally 7:30am – 6:00pm Monday to Friday however these hours should be checked for relevant campus and building by contacting VU Security services on 4999.

(10) Working Alone or In Isolation: is when an employee cannot be seen or heard by another person and when they cannot expect contact from another employee for over an hour. This can include, but is not limited to working/studying:

- a. in an office or laboratory outside of normal business hours or when work colleagues have left work;
- b. in situations where employees are called out at night;
- c. on field trips to remote locations;
- d. within VU premises in a location that is distant or concealed.

(11) Working When Emergency Response is Limited: refers to situations where access to emergency services (e.g. ambulance, first aid, police, fire services) is either non-existent or limited due to:

- a. Working after hours;
- b. Working in remote locations; and/or,
- c. Working alone or isolation.

Section 4 - Policy/Regulation

(12) [Health and Safety Policy](#).

Section 5 - Procedure

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Appropriate Manager	Ensure that employees within their area of responsibility who need to work alone and/or in isolation: 1. undertake the Working Alone or in Isolation Notification and Risk Assessment Form HSW - F - 074 (HR 72); 2. are appropriately trained and instructed so that they can undertake their work safely; Review and approve the Working Alone or in Isolation Notification and Risk Assessment Form HSW - F - 074 (HR 72). Ensure that a suitable method of communication is established and monitored.
Employee	Undertake and submit the Working Alone or in Isolation Notification and Risk Assessment Form HSW - F - 074 (HR 72) to their appropriate manager; Work in accordance workplace with procedures, instructions and the controls measures identified via the risk assessment process; Undertake emergency training as required; Establish and maintain a suitable method of communication; Carry their identification on their person at all times.
OHS Team	Employees can utilise the Security personnel to access their vehicles after hours and shuttle buses are available on some campuses to the nearest train station.

Part B - Procedures

(13) [Working Alone or in Isolation Notification and Risk Assessment Form HSW – F – 074](#) (HR 72) must be completed by the employee prior to them working alone or in isolation.

(14) The appropriate manager must review the completed [Working Alone or in Isolation Notification and Risk Assessment Form HSW – F – 074](#) and:

- a. If the manager is satisfied that the employee has adequately identified and addressed the risks associated with the proposed work, they must sign the approval section of the form;
- b. If the manager is not satisfied that the employee has adequately identified and addressed the risks associated with the proposed work, they must work with the employee to conduct a more thorough risk assessment;
- c. If the appropriate manager is not familiar with the notification and risk assessment process, they can contact a member of the OHS Team for assistance.

(15) Generic assessments that have been developed within 12 months of the proposed work can be used if there are no significant changes to the work and/or working environment and the existing risk assessment remains entirely applicable. If there are changes to the work or working environment, these changes will need to be assessed separately. The assessment of these changes should be attached to the existing risk assessment or a new risk assessment can be completed and re-submitted.

Communication

(16) Employees working alone or in isolation must have ready access to a reliable mean means of communication at all times. The means of communication will vary depending on the circumstances and examples include phones (mobile, satellite, landline), short - wave radios, emergency location beacons, intercom, email, skype.

(17) The means of communication will be determined by the risks associated with the work being done and the functionality of the different types of systems.

Access

(18) If an employee requires Security to give them access to a building (i.e. they do not have key or fob access), access will be at the discretion of the Security personnel. When Security personnel are not available at a particular campus during the period of the intended after-hours access, it may be necessary (if indicated by the risk assessment), for the Security Services to be engaged for the purposes of maintaining a secure site, granting access and securing the sites at the completion of the work. The costs associated with providing this access will be the responsibility of the area requesting the access.

Notification

(19) When indicated by the risk assessment, an employee intending to work alone or in isolation at a VU location may be required to notify Security when they arrive and leave the VU premises.

(20) Employees should wherever possible or when indicated by the risk assessment, inform another person of their anticipated work start and completion times and the exact work location.

(21) When indicated by the risk assessment, the appropriate manager or their nominee should be informed that the employee is working in an isolated/remote location and regular contact should be maintained. When the work is completed and the employee has left the remote/isolated location the appropriate manager or their nominee should be notified.

Identification

(22) Employees work alone or in isolation must carry their staff/student identification with them at all times. Employees who do not have their staff/student identification card will not be allowed to access or remain in a building after hours.

Emergencies

(23) In the event of an emergency the employees must:

- a. Ensure, that as much as possible that they maintain their own safety and avoid placing themselves at risk;
- b. Contact VU Security (ph: 9919 6666) so that university response procedures and be initiated;
- c. Where necessary, obey any evacuation signals and remain at the assemble area.

Training

(24) All employees should be trained in the emergency procedures during either their staff induction, contractor induction or student orientation.

(25) Staff, student and contractors can undertake the Emergency Management training via VU Develop (Staff), VU Collaborate (Students) and VU Rapid Global (Contractors).

Section 6 - Guidelines

(26) [Working Alone or in Isolation Notification and Risk Assessment Form HSW – F – 074](#).

Status and Details

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