

## Scope

1. This standard applies to anyone working; studying or taking part in any activity managed by UCL and includes staff, graduate students, contractors and visitors.
2. Undergraduate students should not normally carry out project/practical work unsupervised. However, it may be necessary for some aspects of project work to be carried out alone if suitable controls are in place.
3. This standard is intended to address the lone worker risks associated with the variety of work patterns encountered at UCL.

## Legal requirements

4. Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999 requires that:
  - all work is assessed for risk;
  - workers at particular risk are identified e.g. those who work alone.

## UCL Arrangements

5. UCL arrangements that apply to this standard:
  - UCL's Work Life Balance Policy

## Definitions

**Work:** paid employment (on a fixed or permanent contract), studying, carrying out research, volunteering to conduct UCL business

**Safety role holder:** first aider, fire marshal

**Supervisor:** a person who has a duty to manage any aspect of the work activities of the department, whether it's carried out by an employee or student e.g. line manager, principle investigator, research group leader etc.

**Lone working:** working without close or direct supervision or remote from colleagues i.e. colleagues may be in the next room or on other floors in the same building. Lone workers can be peripatetic (routinely walks between work locations) or in fixed locations. Lone working can occur at any time i.e. either during normal working hours or out of hours.

**Normal working hours:** defined by Heads of Department as times when safety role holders are at optimum levels. This definition must take account of the time of year:

- term-time;
- non-term time;
- extended working hours e.g. events, exhibitions and exam time
- UCL closures e.g. Christmas, Easter and Bank Holidays.

**Out-of-hours:** times when safety role holder levels are below optimum levels e.g. evenings, early mornings, weekends and public holidays. N.B. Work conducted out-of-hours will not always be while alone.

## Risks associated with working alone

- unable to summon help as a result of injury, ill health or an emergency.
- unable to carry out a task safely while alone.

## Responsibilities

6. Heads of Department must ensure that there are arrangements in place to identify and control the risks arising from work that is carried out while alone. The arrangements will include:
  - a definition of normal working hours;
  - a list of Departmental activities which **must not** be conducted while alone. See table 2 for guidance;

- authorisation of routine specified lone working activities (See Table 2 for examples);
- procedure for authorising non-routine lone working activities.

7. Line Managers must ensure that:

- Non-routine lone working is avoided where possible (but see Table 2 for additional controls that should be in place if such work is undertaken);
- time spent lone working is planned;
- risk assessments for the work under their control indicate the additional control measures required if the work is carried out while alone;
- measures to control risk while working alone are implemented;
- risk assessments are reviewed.

## ***Assessing the risks***

8. Managers must consider the following when deciding if an activity can be conducted while alone:

### **Individual vulnerabilities**

- Are any individuals eg women especially at risk when working alone?
- Is the person medically fit to work alone? Some medical conditions make sufferers unsuitable for lone working. Managers who have concerns about an individual's fitness for lone working should refer them to Occupational Health after completion of the 'Safety Critical Health Assessment form'.
- Are inexperienced workers especially at risk while working alone?
- Individuals with impaired vision, hearing or mobility.
- Individuals whose first language is not English e.g. arrangements are in place to ensure information is communicated effectively, especially emergency arrangements

### **Work patterns**

Specific work patterns may begin during normal working hours and continue out of hours.

- shift work
- continuous experiments
- flexible work pattern (Work Life Balance Policy)
- working at home (Work Life Balance Policy)

### **Location or work area**

The work may be conducted in places managed by UCL, another employer or an external location. If the worker is peripatetic more than one work location or area may be visited on the same day.

- office, laboratory, workshop
- storeroom, plant room, cold room, clean room, interview room, server room
- riverbank, moorland, home of a research subject, vehicle

### **Work activity**

If the task is to be carried out by someone working alone the risk assessment must consider the hazards of being alone in addition to the hazards involved with the work itself. (See table 2)

### **Access arrangements**

Arrangements to prevent unauthorised access to areas where staff work alone. Access to building or work area controlled by;

- Security or reception staff
- Keypad
- Entry card

## ***Managing the risks***

9. Managers **must** ensure that:

- the lone worker understands the risks and precautions involved in their work i.e. has enough experience to work without direct supervision;
- the lone worker has information to deal with emergencies. (See table 1) N.B. the lone worker may not be familiar with the building in which they are working.

10. Managers should consider one or more of the following controls depending on the level of risk:
- a start/finish time has been agreed for out of hours lone working;
  - the lone worker informs their supervisor that work has started / finished;
  - periodic checks by the supervisor or person designated by the supervisor are made at agreed intervals e.g. hourly. Checks can be in person, by telephone (mobile or landline) or two-way radio. Alternatively, the lone worker can contact the supervisor or person designated by the supervisor at agreed intervals. N.B. ensure the means of communication works in the work location e.g. mobile phone reception is not universal;
  - a procedure is in place to deal with failure to contact lone worker at agreed intervals;
  - a record is kept of the information that has been provided to individuals who work alone.

### ***Review the risk assessment***

11. Managers **must** review the risk assessment periodically:
- at intervals determined by the risk assessment e.g. every 12 months or sooner;
  - if something goes wrong e.g. accident or incident;
  - if something changes e.g. people, equipment or location
    - is it still necessary for the work to be conducted alone
    - is the worker still medically fit to work alone

Safety Services Reference(s):

Lone Working	
Standard First Published	October 2012
Reviewed	September 2018

## Table 1: Lone Worker Emergency Procedures

Arrangements for normal working hours may be different or need to be supplemented when working out of hours.

	Normal working hours	Additional procedures for out of hours work
<b>How to contact security</b>	<p>Ensure the lone worker has the <u>local</u> number for contacting security internally and if using a mobile phone (e.g. Bloomsbury Campus 222 or 0207 679 2222).</p> <p>If work is conducted off site e.g. fieldwork then contact 999</p> <p>In some situations it will not be practical / possible to contact security and a lone worker alarm may be appropriate. Features include: an automatic alert to a pre-arranged responder; operation is discreet; activated if worker stops moving (motion sensor); worker periodic response e.g. 20 minute intervals.</p> <p>If a panic button is installed staff must know how/when to use it and what to expect as a response.</p>	<p>Ensure that passenger lift alarms / telephones are responded to out-of-hours</p> <p>Access to the building is controlled e.g. swipe card.</p> <p>Consider personal security and transport arrangements when leaving the workplace late at night.</p>
<b>How to raise the alarm on discovering a fire</b>	As displayed on fire action notices	
<b>Evacuation procedures</b>	As displayed on the fire action notices	<p>Ensure normal evacuation routes are available out-of-hours i.e. some routes may be locked-off for security reasons.</p> <p>A log book for of out-of-hours lone workers to sign when they enter / leave will help the fire brigade or security to account for building occupants. NB only effective if lone workers enter / leave by door where log located and occupants who entered prior to the commencement of the out-of-hours period sign the log.</p> <p>On leaving the building the lone worker must report to the fire brigade or security staff, if in attendance.</p>
<b>Accidents / incidents</b>	How to report accidents and incidents (including non-injury incidents)	Next day if not practical out of hours
<b>First aid arrangements</b>	<p>Location of the nearest first aid box</p> <p>How to contact the nearest first aider</p>	<p>Ensure the nearest first aid box is available (e.g. not locked away)</p> <p>Are there first aiders available? Identify alternative first aid provision.</p>

**Table 2: Lone working - activities guidance**

The following list is intended to provide guidance for Heads of Department when preparing Departmental arrangements.

<b>NO</b>	<p><b>Reasons why work cannot be conducted while alone:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. risk control measures for the activity cannot be implemented if an individual is working alone e.g. footing a ladder</li> <li>2. when emergency procedures rely on the presence of others e.g. operating emergency stop buttons, implementing/assisting spill procedures, responding to monitor alarms</li> <li>3. some hazard specific activities must not be carried out while alone (legal requirement)</li> <li>4. worker is under 18 years old (Young Person )</li> </ol>
<b>POSSIBLE</b>	5. emergency procedures (see table 1) and additional control measures
<b>YES</b>	6. emergency procedures (see table 1)

ACTIVITY		Additional control measures
Operating dangerous workshop machinery e.g. lathes, milling machines, shapers and power presses	2	
Work with equipment powered off 3 phase electricity supply or other high energy source	2	
At or near exposed live electricity conductors	2	
Work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large volumes of hazardous liquids e.g. corrosives, flammables</li> <li>• asphyxiants e.g. carbon dioxide</li> <li>• substance that react violently e.g. explosive, toxic gas evolved</li> <li>• decanting cryogenic substances</li> </ul>	2	
Use of blowlamps, gas/plasma cutting or welding equipment	2	
Confined spaces e.g. storage tanks, silos, reaction vessels, enclosed drains or sewers, service tunnels	3	
Young persons (under 18)	4	
Lifting or moving heavy loads	1	
Interviewing members of the public / research participants in their home or isolated locations where the interviewee is not vetted and/or the interviewer is vulnerable	1	

ACTIVITY		Additional control measures
Work above or near water e.g. tanks, ponds, rivers, canals etc.	5	Controls identified after a detailed assessment of local conditions.
Interviewing members of the public / research participants in their home or isolated locations	5	Interviewee vetted and/or interviewer not vulnerable Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Class 3b lasers and above	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Working in containment level 3 facilities with pathogens	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Risk of violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reception work</li> <li>• events e.g. exhibitions, social events</li> <li>• leaving or travelling between work locations (e.g. out-of-hours)</li> </ul>	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Contractor(s) appointed by and therefore managed by the Department	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Work at height	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Undergraduate project work	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Isolated / remote locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• storeroom, plant room, cold room, clean room, interview room</li> <li>• riverbank, moorland, seashore</li> </ul>	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Checking equipment / experiments left running for extended periods (i.e. unattended)	6	
Work with microscopes / analytical equipment	6	
Laboratory work involving cleaning and low risk material preparation	6	
Office based work	6	
Maintenance of workshop machinery.	6	Machines must be isolated i.e. switched off