

Personal Safety when Lone Working and Travelling

Scope

1. This standard applies to anyone working, travelling; studying or taking part in any activity managed by UCL and includes staff, graduate students, contractors and visitors.
2. This standard is intended to address the lone worker personal safety associated with the variety of work patterns encountered at UCL.

Legal requirements

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation covering health and safety in the workplace. It places duty of care on employers to take "reasonably practicable" steps to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all employees.

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.
- assessments to be carried out regarding the personal safety of any person who may be affected by a work activity, not just employees.

Responsibilities

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.

Line Managers must ensure that:

- 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.

Definitions

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.

Personal Safety: an individual's ability to go about their everyday life free from the threat or fear of psychological, emotional or physical harm from others.

Additional Guidance

There is additional guidance relating to **lone working** which should also be referred to:

- [Offsite and Lone Working](#)
- [Advice for Staff and Students \(COVID-19 outbreak\)](#)
- [UCL Work Life Balance](#)

I. Staff Personal Safety

You have a duty of care to yourself, your employer, your colleagues, contractors and members of the public whom you interact in the context of your work.

Safety on the Street

Plan Ahead

- ✚ Before you go out, consider how you are going to get home, e.g. can you travel home with a friend? What time does the last bus/train leave?
- ✚ Prepare for your day before you leave – consider what you might need.
- ✚ Conduct your own dynamic risk assessment. In situations, if you feel at all uncomfortable or unsure, leave.
- ✚ Trust your instincts.
- ✚ Consider setting up a buddy system with someone so they know your plans for the day.
- ✚ Think about arranging a call or text with your 'buddy' for every 2 hours. Have a predetermined code word ready in case you want to summon help.
- ✚ Plan your journey – google street view is particularly useful for identifying landmarks in an unknown area.
- ✚ Frequently update someone, e.g. buddy, family member, on your plans.

When travelling on foot

- ✚ Try to use well-lit, busy streets and use the route you know best.
- ✚ Plan your route, and look confident as you travel.
- ✚ If you do have to pass higher risk areas, consider what how you'd respond if you felt threatened.
- ✚ Consider heading for a public place; somewhere you know there will be other people, for example a garage or shop.
- ✚ Whenever possible, walk facing oncoming traffic to avoid curb crawlers.
- ✚ If you think you are being followed, trust your instincts and take action. As confidently as you can, cross the road, turning to see who is behind you. If you are still being followed, keep moving. Head to a busier area. Call the police if necessary.

Remain aware

- ✚ Keep your mind on your surroundings – avoid distractions such as your mobile phone or headphones.
- ✚ Be aware when using cash point machines. If there are signs of tampering or people acting suspiciously, do not use it.
- ✚ Try not to keep all your valuables in one place. It's a good idea to keep valuables such as wallets in an inside pocket.

Transport Safety

Travelling by train, bus or taxi/minicab is generally safe but violent and aggressive incidents do happen, so it is wise to take a few simple precautions to improve your safety and increase your confidence.

On Public Transport

- ✚ Know where you are going and which stop you need.
- ✚ Check departure times, especially of last buses or trains.
- ✚ Try and have your ticket, pass or change ready in your hand so your purse or wallet is out of sight.
- ✚ If travelling out of hours or in an unfamiliar area, try and arrange for someone to meet you at the bus stop or train station. Otherwise try to walk purposefully to your destination.
- ✚ Wait for a bus or train in a well-lit place near other people whenever possible.
- ✚ Carry extra money in case you get stranded and need to take another bus, train or cab.
- ✚ If a bus is empty or it is after dark, it may be safer to stay on the lower deck and sit closer to the driver (maintain recommended social distance).
- ✚ On trains avoid compartments which have no access to corridors or other parts of the train. Try to sit with other people (maintain recommended social distance) and avoid empty carriages.
- ✚ If you feel uneasy, move to another seat or carriage. If you feel threatened, make as much noise as possible to attract the attention of the driver or guard.
- ✚ British Transport Police non-emergency text number is 61016 for reporting any incidents.

Taxis and Minicabs

- ✚ Taxis (Hackney Carriages) can be hailed in the street. They look like purpose-built taxis or black cabs and have an illuminated taxi sign on the roof.
- ✚ Licensed minicabs cannot be hailed in the street. They must be pre-booked. The driver should have ID and the vehicle will have some sort of license displayed on it.
- ✚ Always carry the telephone number of a trusted, licensed company with you.
- ✚ When booking a taxi or minicab, ask for the driver's name, as well as the make and color of the car – use app or website to pre-book. Confirm the driver's details when they arrive – is it the taxi or minicab you ordered?
- ✚ If you chat to the driver, be careful not to give out any personal details.
- ✚ Remember - Minicabs that pick up fares on the street, without being pre-booked, are illegal, uninsured and potentially very dangerous.
- ✚ If you feel threatened:
 - Trust your instincts - If you are at all worried, ask the driver to stop in a busy area and get out of the car.
 - If the driver refuses to stop, use a mobile to call the police and alert other drivers and pedestrians by waving or calling out the window.

Cycling Safety

- ✚ Keep your bike in good working order. Repairs are best done at home rather than on the road.
- ✚ Always look like you know where you are going.
- ✚ Dress to be seen and to be safe. Remember to wear a safety helmet.
- ✚ Obey the rules of the road and make sure you are aware of your surroundings.
- ✚ Avoid short-cuts even if you are in a hurry. Never cycle anywhere where you would not be comfortable walking.

II. Student Personal Safety

Accommodation

- ✚ When you leave your room in halls or private accommodation, always lock the door and shut the window, even if you are only popping next door for a minute.
- ✚ Consider the risks before inviting someone you've just met into your room.
- ✚ Don't let anyone into your block by holding a door open unless you know them or have checked their ID.
- ✚ If you see anything suspicious, report it to your campus security or police.

Going out at night

- ✚ Try to plan ahead. Make sure someone knows where you are going, who you are meeting and when you expect to return.
- ✚ Always plan how you are going to get home again.

Safety when out and about

- ✚ Stay alert and aware of your surroundings.
- ✚ Avoid chatting on your mobile phone or listening to music on your headphones, as this can distract you from your surroundings or any potential danger signs.
- ✚ Always try to walk confidently and purposefully.
- ✚ If you are out at night, try to stick to busy streets and near other people. Avoid danger spots such as poorly-lit areas, deserted parks, or quiet alleyways and walk facing oncoming traffic to avoid kerb crawlers.
- ✚ Ask if there are any areas near your halls that should be avoided. Some short-cuts may be great during the day but have a reputation amongst other students for being unsafe at night.
- ✚ If you see someone else in trouble, think twice before trying to help. This may just aggravate the problem and you could end up hurt as well. It may be a lot more helpful to shout for help, call the police or generally make a lot of noise to attract attention.

Travel

- ✚ Inform someone that you are on your way.
- ✚ Consider how you are getting home before leaving the house. Pre-book a local licensed cab so you know it will be coming at the end of your night.
- ✚ Only hail a taxi if it has the illuminated taxi sign.
- ✚ Sit in the back and avoid giving away personal details.
- ✚ Have your fare ready.
- ✚ Try and keep the number of a local, licensed firm with you.
- ✚ When travelling by public transport, wait in a well-lit, busy area.
- ✚ Make sure you can get to your ticket easily.
- ✚ Don't be afraid of moving should someone's behaviour cause you concern.
- ✚ Trust your instinct.

Document control

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