# Working Alone or in Isolation

Instructor Guide

Safety Talk Overview

Safety Talks are a method to refresh an employee’s knowledge and skills, maintain their interest in safety and illustrate the organization’s commitment to creating a healthy & safe work environment. Safety Talks can be performed on a weekly basis or before the start of a new scope of work and should be about 15 minutes in duration. Generally, these Safety Talk meetings are led by a supervisor and should be mandatory for all crew members to attend. The content should be centred on a single topic (e.g. a safety rule, safe job procedures, recent incident, Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) meeting minutes, inspection results, etc.).

Topic Overview:

The purpose is to provide information on when an individual is considered to be working alone or in isolation. This includes criteria for determining if an individual has assistance that is readily available.

The guideline is intended to safeguard individuals, as defined in the *Workers Compensation Act ("Act"*), who are assigned to work alone or in isolation. In addition, the requirements only apply when assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of an emergency, injury, or illness.

Demonstration and Discussion Topics

🞏 **Discuss** the requirements to safeguard employees who work alone or in isolation.

🞏 **Tour** the work area with workers pointing out where the accidents can occur.

🞏 **Distribute** the “Do’s & Don’ts” section of this handout.

🞏 **Use** the “Instructor Guide” section of the handout as your discussion guide

🞏 **Discuss** how accidents can happen.

🞏 **Remind** employees that they are required to wear adequate personal protective equipment.

🞏 **Explain** what can be done to minimize the risk of accidents (Do’s & Don’ts in handout)

🞏 **Emphasize** that following safe work procedures is mandatory.

🞏 **Make it real** by telling at least two true stories of injuries from your experience.

🞏 **Discuss** the attitude of “it won’t happen to me”. Remind them that an injury can and will happen if they take shortcuts or are careless.

🞏 **Answer** any questions or concerns they might have.

🞏 **Set a good example** by working safely at all times.

🞏 **Document** the Safety Talk by completing the “Safety Talk Record” section and filing it.

Working Alone or in Isolation



SAFETY TALK RECORD

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Discussion Leader: | | | Date: | | | |
| Department: | | | Time: | | | |
| Attendees (Please print your name and sign beside it. If you are a contractor, also include your company name): | | | | | | |
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| Near Miss/Incidents and Investigations Reviewed: (None this month 🞏) | | | | | | |
| (Industry alerts can be discussed here as well) | | | | | | |
| Safety Topic Discussed: | | | | | | |
| Title: | | | | Date: | | |
| Any questions or concerns from workers? | | | | | | |
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| Action Needed: | Person responsible: | | | | Due Date: | Completed Date: |
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| Reviewed By: |  | | | |  |  |
| *Supervisor/Manager Print Name & Sign:* | | | | | *Date:* | |

# Working Alone or in Isolation

**Definitions**

* *Working alone means working in an area beyond the visual or audible range of another worker.*
* *Working in Isolation means working at a job where the location or circumstances would prevent help in the event of an injury.*
* *Contact Person is the person or agency who will be called when a check in/or check out is required, and who will monitor the situation, keep records, and contact the worker if he/she fails to check in or out at the appointed time.*

**Who’s at risk?**

Employees who work alone or in isolation tend to be more vulnerable than those who have co-workers present, particularly if the lone worker is on shift during late night hours. If a lone worker is injured or an emergency occurs, how does the worker get help? What if the worker is unconscious? Even though such incidents aren’t that common, when they do occur the consequences can be serious.

**What must the employer do?**

If you have an employee who is working alone or in isolation, it’s your responsibility as an employer to tell the employee about any hazards in the workplace. This means you will need to identify hazards and assess the risks associated with them. You can prevent most workplace injuries and illnesses by identifying hazards and taking steps to eliminate them. If you can’t eliminate them, then implement controls to minimize the risk to your workers. Hazard identification doesn’t have to be a complicated process. Start by going over each area of your workplace — look for hazards and think about what could possibly go wrong in a specific area or while a specific task is being carried out.

**Check-in procedure**

In addition to any other written safe work procedures, employers must develop and implement a procedure for checking on the well-being of employees who are working alone or in isolation. A check-in procedure must include the following:

* The designated person who will establish contact and record results
* Time intervals between checks
* A check at the end of the shift
* A procedure to follow in case the employee cannot be contacted

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The time intervals for checking the well-being of the employee must be developed in consultation with the employee assigned to work alone or in isolation. Time intervals should be based on the level of risk the employee is exposed to, with lower risks allowing for longer periods between checks. For example, an employee in a store that is located in a strip mall, with workers of other employers nearby, may not require checks as frequently as a worker who is working in an isolated premise.

The person assigned to check on the well-being of a worker must be trained in the written safe work procedures and what to do if they are unable to make contact with the worker.



**Basic requirements for a check-in procedure**

* Set time intervals between checks. For example, contact the lone worker every half hour or hour, depending on the level of risk.
* Consult with the worker who is assigned to work alone the time intervals.
* Check on the worker at the start and end of each work shift.
* Designate a person (or contract a third-party service provider) who is responsible for establishing contact at regular intervals.
* The designated person or service provider must record each check-in contact.
* Establish a way to contact lone workers — for example, via cell phone, texting, two-way radio (walkie-talkie), trunked radio, or satellite phone.
* Describe steps to be taken if the lone worker cannot be contacted.
* Train the person assigned to check on the lone worker in the person-check procedure and make sure they know what to do if he or she is unable to make contact.

# Working Alone or in Isolation

**What is my responsibility as a worker?**

As a worker, you are responsible for working without undue risk to yourself or others. To keep safe on the job, don’t assume you can do something you’ve never done before.

* Ask your supervisor to show you how to do it safely before you begin work.
* Ask your employer for job safety training and always use all safety gear and protective clothing when and where required.
* Be sure to always follow safe work procedures and encourage your co-workers to do the same.
* Immediately correct unsafe conditions or report them right away to your supervisor and know how to handle any hazardous materials or chemicals you use on the job.
* If you have any doubts about your safety, talk to your supervisor.

DO’s:

* A hazard assessment of the job where the worker will be alone or in isolation
* Establish a program and procedures for workers who are alone or in isolation
* Train all your staff to these procedures

Don’ts:

* Don’t take any chances with the safety or well-being of your workers