

## University Health & Safety Arrangements: Chapter 10



### Lone Working

Key word(s):	Lone working;
Target audience:	Any member of staff managing others who work alone, occasionally or routinely Any person preparing risk assessments for lone workers

### Introduction

1. For the purposes of this Chapter, lone working is defined as a person working without close or direct supervision and without contact from others. It can take place both out of hours and during the normal working day.
2. There is no legal prohibition on lone working but the process of competent risk assessment will identify certain circumstances where the risks involved are not capable of being adequately controlled, and where lone working is not acceptable. This Chapter identifies typical work scenarios where this might be the case. Where lone working does take place on University premises, the arrangements which must be made, are described below.

### Arrangements

3. Lone working must not take place on University premises in the following situations unless a suitable and sufficient risk assessment can fully justify the way in which the work is being undertaken and steps can be taken to adequately control the risks. The assessment must be approved by the Head of School / Directorate: -
  - a) Entry into confined spaces where there may be a risk of asphyxiation, contact with hazardous substances, fire or explosion risk etc.
  - b) Use of dangerous machinery where there is a risk of entanglement, entrapment, crushing, impact or injury from cutting or shearing, stabbing or

puncture (i.e. equipment found in engineering workshops and some food preparation areas, the use of which involves access to unguarded moving parts, for example during maintenance and repair, or setting up)

- c) Work on or near live uninsulated electrical conductors.
  - d) Work with hydrogen fluoride and cyanide (where any first aid treatment must be administered immediately)
  - e) Work on roofs, use of suspended access equipment
  - f) Out of hours work in CL3 facilities, where access is restricted to named individuals and prohibited to Security.
4. Lone working must be considered as part of routine risk assessments for the following activities
- a) Work in laboratories involving flammable, highly flammable or extremely flammable liquids, flammable gases, asphyxiants, toxic substances and corrosive substances, biological agents and any chemicals that present a risk to health.
  - b) Work at height using ladders, stepladders, etc.
  - c) Work involving the movement of cash or other valuables
5. In the scenarios outlined in 3 and 4 above, copies of the signed risk assessment should be issued to the lone worker. If the work is to take place outside normal working hours, authority to carry out the work (in the form of a permit-to-work, or letter signed by the Head of School /Departments/Institutes (or equivalent) and Directorate) must be kept available for inspection by Security. The permit / letter should include a description of the work approved to be carried out, and details of the location(s) where work will be undertaken, permitted activities and any specific precautions required. In some buildings, especially those with controlled access, alternative arrangements may deliver suitable control of the risk.
6. In many situations e.g. typical office work, the risks of lone working are minimal, and can take place with minor additional precautions to working practices. In offices, for example, the main perceived risk may be to personal safety, security either from intruders in the building, or from walking alone to the car park or public transport, particularly if this is late at night or in the dark. There may be a risk if the lone worker falls ill and needs assistance, all staff should be encouraged to keep in touch whilst working alone in the office and to download the [Safezone App](#) to summon appropriate assistance if required.

Basic precautions can be taken and these should be included in the local arrangements and in the risk assessment for working in the office, further guidance can be found on Safety Services website-Safety Toolkits:  
[https://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/lone\\_working/](https://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/lone_working/)

7. Other situations where lone working may arise include staff undertaking home visits and staff visiting off site facilities. A risk assessment must be undertaken and controls followed in these situations.

Further guidance on work off campus can be found in Safety Services tool kit at [http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/work\\_off\\_campus/](http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/work_off_campus/)

8. At all times, staff and students should use existing, recognised building practices for access and egress. This includes the use of signing-in books (where these exist) or other means of keeping records of who is in buildings out-of-hours.

### Responsibilities

9. **The Heads of Schools/Departments/Institutes (or equivalent) and Directorates** are responsible for ensuring that the requirements in this Chapter are implemented and followed
10. **All individual members of staff** have a responsibility for following the requirements in this Chapter, and any specific control measures listed in the risk assessment, to ensure their own safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

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