

Brandon University Working Alone Policy An Administrative Policy

Working alone in certain circumstances or environments may be unsafe and requires special arrangements to minimize potential risks of injury. Employees and supervisors are required to make every effort to assess hazards, to take steps to avoid unnecessary risk, and to make available methods by which misfortune can be managed to minimize damage or injury.

Definition:

In accordance with Regulation 105/88 R under the Workplace Safety and Health Act, an employee is working alone when the employee is performing a job function and is not in the presence of his/her supervisor, another person in a supervisory capacity designated by the University, or another employee of the University at the time the job function is being performed. The fact that the employee may be in contact with people from another employer or the general public does not eliminate the concept that the employee is working alone and, therefore, assessments and requirements applicable to the risks of the work will still apply.

Assessment of Risks:

Particular job functions will have inherent hazards associated with them and may be deemed as high risk, low risk or a combination of the two. The degree of risk will not eliminate the requirement to be aware of the hazard control measures applicable, but it will help to determine the appropriate hazard control measures.

Examples of work functions that present high-risk hazards may include working with or in:

- Confined spaces
- High energy materials (radioactive, high temperature)
- Cryogenic (low temperature) materials/processes
- Toxic gases, liquids or solids
- Flammable liquids
- High pressure or high voltage systems
- Equipment or machinery
- Extreme weather conditions
- Laboratory functions
- Services where cash or goods are handled that may attract criminal victimization

Examples of work functions that present low-risk hazards may include working with or in:

- Maintenance functions on inactive equipment
- Security guard functions except in hazardous locations
- Janitorial or custodial functions
- Routine job functions that are part of a long standing operating procedure and where experience has shown them to be safe
- Desk work

The Policy:

Both supervisors and employees are required to assess the conditions or circumstances under which the employee may be working alone to determine what may result in misfortune to the employee working alone and attempt to reduce the probability of such misfortune. Safe working procedures must be developed to minimize the risks inherent in the hazards and there must be a means of securing assistance for employees working alone in the event of injury or misfortune. It is recommended that safe working procedures be written and that employees and supervisors sign the document to indicate that the procedures have been read and understood. The procedures document must be maintained in a location for easy reference by employees without the requirement to ask a supervisor.

1. Employees handling cash should, whenever possible, work within visual and hearing distance of another employee. Cash should be concealed as much as possible and processed away from the public view in a secured area. Cash to be transported to another part of the campus must be concealed and taken using a route where people will be present. Deposits are to be taken to the bank by armored car personnel. In the event of robbery, the cash is to be surrendered immediately.
2. Employees performing work in the high risk-hazard category will rarely work alone. When it is necessary to work alone; employees should have a two-way radio or cell phone with them; inform their supervisor where they will be, what time they will start and report in when the job is completed and at regular intervals, not to exceed two hours, throughout the job. Supervisors of IUOE (A) and (B) employee groups are to be available by radio and/or cell phone 24 hours each day and to regularly visit employees at the worksites to ensure appropriate and safe practices and conditions are maintained. Specific detailed safe operating instructions for work performed by staff of the Physical Plant are available in the Physical Plant office and from relevant supervisors.
3. Employees performing work in the low risk-hazard category are expected to use good judgment, to be aware of their surroundings and potential hazards and to take precautions to ensure the safety of themselves and other occupants of the campus. Employees are expected to keep emergency telephone numbers accessible, and take precautions when working alone such as locking doors, being aware of other employees and non-employees in the area and checking on one another at regular intervals. Any concerns about safely working alone should be brought to the attention of the supervisor for resolution.
4. Employees that normally work alone with clients should be aware of individuals that may be disturbed, upset or threatening. Employees should not enter a space with someone with whom they do not feel safe. Units on campus that face the potential of having to work with a disturbed, upset or threatening individual must have a safe working procedure developed, which includes a means of securing assistance, if necessary.

Responsibility:

The responsibility for this policy rests with the Vice-President (Administration and Finance). Questions and concerns may be raised through the employee's supervisor, through the Human Resources Office, through the University Workplace Safety and Health Committee or with the Vice-President.

Approved by the President's Advisory Group
May 15, 2002