

 BRANDON UNIVERSITY	Working Alone	Approved by: President's Administrative Council Administered by: Vice-President (Administration & Finance)
Administrative Policy and Procedure	First Approved: May 15, 2002	Updated: December 15, 2018

Brandon University ("the University") is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive campus environment for students, staff, faculty and visitors.

1.0 Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, faculty and visitors to the University, including volunteers, consultants, contractors and their employees.

2.0 Policy

Working alone in certain circumstances or environments may be unsafe and require special arrangements to minimize the possibility of risks to employees. Employees and supervisors are required to make every effort to assess hazards, to take steps to avoid unnecessary risk and to make methods available to minimize damage or injury through the creation of a Working Alone Plan.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 **Working Alone** – Under the provisions of the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act, working alone refers to all workers who are performing a job function and are not in the presence of their employer, supervisor or another worker directly associated with the same employer, at the workplace location and during the same time period the working alone 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.

3.2 **Working Alone Plan** – Special arrangements to keep employees/workers safe from risks while working alone, especially after regular hours when situations may pose additional risk to life and property.

3.3 **Risk Factors** – Job functions that may have inherent hazards associated with them and are deemed as high risk to low risk, or a combination of the two. The degree of risk does not eliminate the requirement to be aware of the hazard control measures applicable but will help determine the appropriate hazard control measures.

3.4 **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Safety equipment issued to help employees in protecting themselves from the hazards of their work environments. This may include fire retardant or chemical-proof clothing, gloves, hard hats or protective eyewear.

4.0 **Accountability**

The Vice-President (Administration & Finance) is responsible for the communication, administration and interpretation of this policy.

5.0 **Review**

Formal review of this policy will be conducted every three (3) years with the next scheduled review date December 2021. In the interim, this policy may be revised or rescinded if the President deems necessary or if there are changes within legislation which require such.

6.0 **Previous Policies**

Administrative Policy, Working Alone (May 15, 2002)

7.0 **References**

7.1 Related documents

- Board of Governors Policy, Safety and Health
- Brandon University Emergency Procedures Manual
- Workplace Safety & Health Procedures:
 - o Working Alone
 - o Working in Confined Spaces

7.2 Sources

- Government of Manitoba
 - o The Workplace Safety and Health Act
 - o Workplace Safety and Health Act, Workplace Safety and Health Regulation
- SAFE Work Manitoba

Procedures

Working alone in certain circumstances, situations or environments can be unsafe. The employer and employees/workers have the responsibility and duty to make special arrangements, or a Working Alone Plan, to minimize the possibility of risks when working alone with hazards. For example the handling of hazardous substances or performing hazardous activities should not be permitted when a worker is working alone.

1. Responsibility of employers

- a) Review all worksites and identify employees who are required to work alone.

- b) Identify risks to the employee/worker in terms of the nature of their work, isolation and worksite conditions.

- c) Identify and take any necessary steps to eliminate or reduce identified risks. The steps taken must include the establishment of an effective communication system that consists of:
 - i) Radio communications
 - ii) A telephone (landline or cellular phone)
 - iii) Any other means that will provide effective communication commensurate with the risk involved which may include the following, as applicable:
 - Providing written instructions stating limitations and/or prohibitions of specific activities while working alone.
 - Providing sufficient training and instruction for safe work practices and ensuring minimum standards of competence.
 - Providing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
 - Maintaining regular contact with the person working alone.
 - Providing emergency and survival supplies to the person working under extreme conditions.

2. Working Alone Risk Factors

- a) Work that presents high risk hazards for employees working alone include:
 - i) Entering any confined space (see Confined Space Procedures)
 - ii) Working with:
 - High energy materials
 - Toxic gases, liquids or solids
 - High pressure systems
 - High voltage electrical systems
 - Moving equipment or machinery
 - iii) Working in:
 - Extreme cold weather conditions
 - Laboratory functions
 - Services involving the handling of cash and goods which could cause the attraction of criminal violence
 - iv) Handling and transferring flammable liquids

- b) Work that presents low risk hazards for employees working alone include:
 - i) Maintenance work other than on active processing equipment
 - ii) Security watchman's work (except in hazardous locations)
 - iii) Janitorial or custodial work (except in hazardous locations)
 - iv) Routine job functions that are part of a long standing operating procedure and experience has shown to be safe.

3. Minimizing Risks for Employees Working Alone

When workers are involved in working alone situations, consideration should be given to the fact that should an incident occur, the worker may not be able to secure assistance as readily as when working with a group of co-workers.

a) Second Person or 'Buddy System'

The second person's presence is required at all times. This person must be knowledgeable of the activities of the worker they are observing.

b) Personal Check by Another Person

This involves checking the workers well-being by periodic visits by another worker or supervisor. Visits should be made at regulated intervals. The length of time between checks would depend on the estimated hazard of the worker's function. The person checking the worker who is working alone must be knowledgeable of the worker's activities.

c) Periodic Telephone Contact

The use of a telephone for communication at regulated intervals may be adequate in low risk working alone situations as part of the agreed to plan. The intervals between these contacts would have to be determined by the estimated hazard at the workplace. Protection of persons involved in routine job functions will change when that person and job junction is performed in non-routine conditions. These conditions include the absence of other workers in the workplace or when the function is being conducted during other than normal working hours for that person.

d) Constant or Intermittent Mechanical or Electronic Surveillance

When considering the use of mechanical or electrical surveillance care should be taken to ensure that they monitor a particular worker who is working alone as well as the status of the workplace itself. Personal pagers, 2-way radios, emergency sounding devises, visual-monitoring systems are most commonly utilized. The most important point to consider is that safety measures and systems are suitable to the worker's needs. For example, if an employee is deaf visible alarms should be provided in the workplace.

e) Central Monitoring

This is an arrangement whereby the activities of the worker required to work alone are monitored by a person or facility designated for that purpose. When using a central monitoring system to relay an alarm the following requirements should be addressed:

- i) The system meets all federal, provincial and municipal regulations
- ii) Is the system self-monitoring to ensure that the system is in operating condition at all times.
- iii) Has an emergency power supply that will keep the system in operating condition at all times.

4. Inquiries may be directed as following:

Workplace Safety and Health Officer at merrilld@brandonu.ca or (204) 727-7389.

Office of the Vice-President (Administration & Finance) at admin.finance@brandonu.ca or (204) 727-9723.

All Administrative Policies and Procedures are available in PDF format at <https://www.brandonu.ca/vp-finance/policies/> Alternate formats are available upon request by contacting the Office of the Vice-President (Administration & Finance) at admin.finance@brandonu.ca or (204) 571-7850.