

Working Alone or in Isolation Procedure

Purpose and Scope

To ensure the health and safety of staff, students and others working alone in workplaces under the management or control of Murdoch University such as south street campus, Mandurah campus and its farms.

This procedure outlines the university's requirements and practices for the management of staff, students, contractors, and volunteers who are required to work in isolated circumstances where they may be exposed to risks because of the nature, time, and location of the work or remoteness from other persons or support services.

Note: Work in isolation whilst conducting Fieldwork or trips in remote locations from the university should form part of the Fieldwork procedure. This does not include working from home.

Overarching Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Procedure

1. In this procedure, the following terms have the following meanings:
 - 1.1. "Consequence" means outcome of an event affecting objectives.
 - 1.2. "Consultation" refers to relevant work, health and safety information being shared with workers to ensure workers have input into decisions affecting their health, safety, and welfare at work. Effective consultation draws on the knowledge, experience and ideas of workers and encourages their participation and input to improve the systems established for managing workplace health, safety, and welfare matters.
 - 1.3. "Contractor" means a company or person who is not a staff member of Murdoch University and who performs work on behalf of Murdoch University in connection with a contract (formal or informal) between Murdoch University and the company or person.
 - 1.4. "Controls" means measures that eliminate or reduce risks associated with hazards to as far as reasonably practicable. A hierarchy of controls is set out in the WHS (General) Regulations 2022 and referenced in this document.

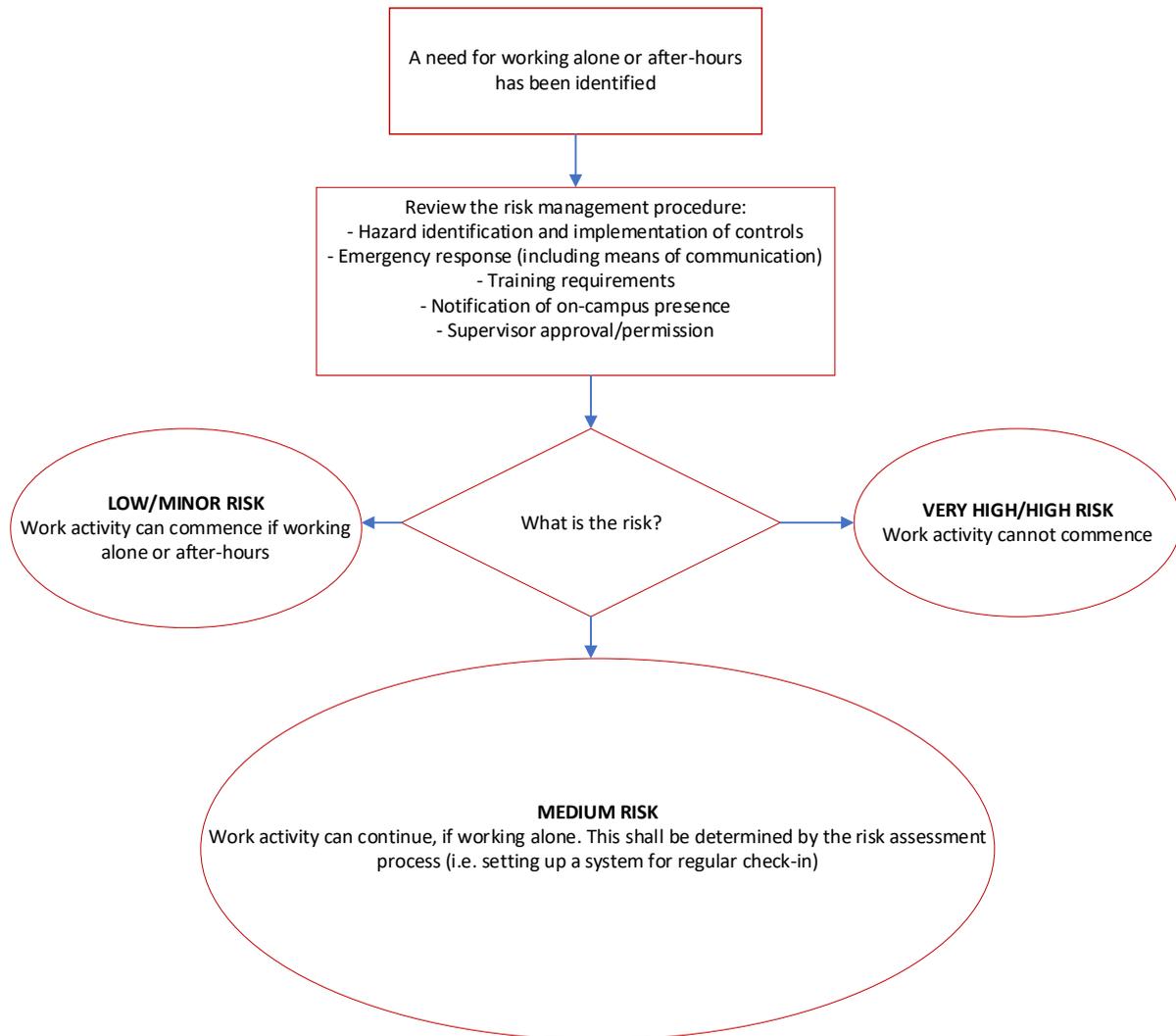
- 1.5. "Hazard" means anything in the workplace that has the potential to cause injury, illness or harm to people, property or the environment.
- 1.6. "Isolation" refers to situations where a person may be exposed to risks and are working by themselves and are unable to get immediate assistance from colleagues or other people. Example: staff or students conducting research in a university building on the weekend.
- 1.7. "Likelihood" means chance or probability of something happening such as an event or a consequence.
- 1.8. "Reasonably Practicable" means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including:
 - 1.8.1. the likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring,
 - 1.8.2. the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk,
 - 1.8.3. what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or risk, and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk,
 - 1.8.4. the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk, and
 - 1.8.5. after assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.
- 1.9. "Risk" is often characterised by reference to potential events and consequences, or a combination of these. Risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event (including changes in circumstances) and the associated likelihood of occurrence.
- 1.10. "Risk Assessment (RA)" involves considering what could happen if someone is exposed to a hazard and the likelihood of it happening. The process is used to identify, assess, and control workplace hazards.
- 1.11. "Risk Rating" means magnitude of a risk or combination of risks, expressed in terms of the combination of consequences and their likelihood. The level of risk.
- 1.12. "Job Safety Analysis (JSA)" describes how work is to be carried out:
 - 1.12.1. Identifies the work activities assessed as having risk
 - 1.12.2. Identifies the risks; and
 - 1.12.3. Describes the controls that will be applied to the work activities.
- 1.13. "Working Alone" means persons who are working by themselves and are unable to get immediate assistance from colleagues or other people (example: employees working alone in an office area after hours).
- 1.14. "After-Hours" means a period of time when normal weekday operations cease.

- 1.15. "Remote or isolated work" means work that is isolated from the assistance of other persons because of the location, time or the nature of the work.
 - 1.16. "Elevated Risk" refers to a situation or condition where the likelihood of a negative outcome or adverse event is higher than usual. This term is to indicate that there is a greater chance of encountering problems or experiencing harm.
 - 1.17. "Others" means people at a workplace not considered to be workers, including customers, visitors, volunteers and students
 - 1.18. "Workers" means a person that carries out work in any capacity for the university including employees, contractors, labour hire employees, apprentices, trainees, students gaining work experience and volunteers
2. Working alone or in isolation
 - 2.1. When working alone or after hours, limited operational support with reduced emergency assistance, increased risk of workplace injury are the main hazards.
 - 2.2. Managers and supervisors should familiarise themselves with the responsibilities to implement safety protocols for working in isolation as listed below:
 - 2.2.1. In work areas with elevated risk, there should be at least two workers present at all times. However, this requirement may be exempt for certain roles, such as grounds staff, cleaners, security personnel, where working alone is necessary for operational reasons. In these cases, appropriate safety protocols must be in place to ensure the worker's safety while isolated. These protocols should include, but are not limited to, regular check ins, communication systems, and emergency response measures.
 - 2.2.2. If working alone in areas with elevated risk, the manager or supervisor should check in with the staff working in isolation at appropriate intervals (example: text messages, teams, phone, email etc).
 - 2.2.3. If a worker working in isolation is uncontactable, their manager or supervisor should alert campus security immediately and initiate a welfare check by visiting the workers' last known location or coordinating with others nearby. If the worker remains uncontactable, emergency services must be notified without delay. All actions taken should be documented, and the incident reviewed to improve future safety protocols.
 - 2.2.4. Emergency contact information must be readily available.
 - 2.2.5. All staff working in isolation must notify their line manager upon leaving campus (example: log-book to sign in/sign out system may be used in laboratory spaces, Security can assist by doing regular checks if informed)
 - 2.2.6. Appropriate emergency procedures must be established for all work performed alone or in isolation.

- 2.2.7. All persons approved to work alone or in isolation must ensure that reliable means of communication are maintained at all times.
- 2.2.8. Define specific check-ins with the employee based on the risk assessment, defining specific check-in intervals.

3. Risk Management

- 3.1. All work performed alone or in isolation must be assessed for risk and be approved by a manager or supervisor.
- 3.2. The manager or supervisor shall ensure that all working alone activities are subject to a risk assessment.
- 3.3. At Murdoch University a risk assessment is predominantly documented on a RAMP – Risk Assessment Murdoch Processes and/or a Job Safety analysis form.
- 3.4. This will allow you to identify potential and/or existing deficiencies and to formulate practical solutions to manage working alone/remote situations. This may include but is not limited to:
 - 3.4.1. Level of training of the person involved.
 - 3.4.2. Level of supervision required.
 - 3.4.3. The time of day when a person may be working alone.
 - 3.4.4. Medical and emergency assistance required and the availability of those resources if outside normal working hours.
 - 3.4.5. The means of communication.
 - 3.4.6. Security of the area.
 - 3.4.7. Possible consequences.
 - 3.4.8. Any pre-existing medical conditions that may give rise to a dangerous or life-threatening situation when working alone.



3.5. For more information on the risk management process at the university, review the risk management procedure.

3.6. Low/Minor Risk working alone

3.6.1. For office/computer-based work or work having been assessed as low risk, the following must be undertaken:

3.6.1.1.1. Staff working back or coming in outside of normal working and class hours should always advise Security that they are on campus and again when they are leaving.

3.6.1.1.2. Staff when off-campus a manager/supervisor or alternate contact person should be notified of the work commencement and expected completion times this could be a fellow worker, supervisor, or security guard.

3.6.1.1.3. all personal security measures, such as lock doors, walk in well-lit areas, request a security personal escort as required.

3.6.1.1.4. If the working alone time is going to be greater than 3 hours, set a standard duration for check-ins (such as

every 3 hours) for consistency and arrange times to phone the contact person to confirm personal safety.

3.7. Where presence of others is recommended

3.7.1. Some work may require another person/s to be present on the floor or in the building. Before this work is approved, arrangements are to be made for another authorised person to be present within the workplace for the period of time that the work is to be undertaken.

3.7.2. Examples of activities may include the use of:

3.7.2.1. X-rays and high-powered lasers.

3.7.2.2. Exposed, energised electrical or electronic systems.

3.7.2.3. Significant volumes of flammable solvents.

3.7.2.4. Schedule 4, 8 or 9 poisons.

3.7.2.5. Radioactive sources.

3.7.2.6. Research projects which include substances or materials hazardous to health.

3.8. Some work is too hazardous to be undertaken in isolation and should be undertaken during normal working hours or when qualified assistance and supervision is available.

3.9. Working Alone example summary table:

Risk Level	Required Actions	Communication Protocols	Approval Requirements
Low	Complete basic risk assessment (JSA). Follow standard operating procedures.	Check-in at start and end of shift via phone or email.	Line manager awareness required.
Medium	Complete RAMP form. Implement additional safety measures.	Scheduled check-ins every 2-4 hours. Use of buddy system if possible.	Supervisor approval required.
High	Detailed risk assessment, Emergency procedures in place.	Continuous monitoring or check-ins every hour. Emergency contact on standby.	Senior management and H&S team approval required.

4. Monitoring and Communication
 - 4.1. Formal arrangements shall be made and implemented to ensure communication is maintained.
 - 4.2. The extent of these arrangements will be dependent on the type of work undertaken and the outcomes of the risk assessment.
 - 4.3. A dedicated contact person shall be nominated, and arrangements agreed and entered into for two-way communication. The method and intervals are to be included. The amount of contact required whilst working alone/remotely depends on the potential risk and the experience of the individual undertaking the work.
5. Safe Operating Procedures
 - 5.1. Safe operating procedures may need to be developed for the circumstances involving working alone/remotely and shall include consideration of:
 - 5.1.1. The procedure for security.
 - 5.1.2. The system for communication.
 - 5.1.3. Communication equipment.
 - 5.1.4. The procedure for response to an incident (including the details in the Workday/e-form online hazard/incident reporting & investigation system).
 - 5.1.5. Any special training required.
 - 5.1.6. Requirements of other WHS procedures.
6. Authorisation
 - 6.1. If you need to work alone or in isolation authorisation to work alone must be obtained prior to commencement of work, you must obtain permission from a Supervisor/Manager. They will assess the risks associated with your planned activities, consider the availability of necessary support services, means of communication and determine if working alone is acceptable.
 - 6.2. An exchange of emails will suffice but records must be retained. The authorisation for working alone or in isolation will specify:
 - 6.2.1. Duration of the approval.
 - 6.2.2. Place of work.
 - 6.2.3. Areas that can be accessed/used.
 - 6.2.4. A description of processes, equipment and tasks that can be undertaken.
 - 6.2.5. Assessment of competency for activity.
 - 6.2.6. A copy of the risk assessment including controls to be used.
 - 6.3. For work which is undertaken on a regular basis the same risk assessment can be utilised while the conditions remain current as documented on the

risk assessment and providing it considers all conditions likely to be experienced during the period of approval.

7. Training

7.1. The supervisor/Manager must determine that the worker undertaking the work alone/remotely is competent to undertake the work. Any person must have completed appropriate induction training, including emergency evacuation and other necessary emergency procedures prior to approval being given. Records of training must be maintained.

8. Emergency Response

8.1. Having an appropriate emergency response plan when staff fail to report in at agreed time/s for all work performed alone or in isolation.

8.2. Working alone or after-hours is not permitted if there is no readily accessible means of communication.

8.3. The campus security at South Street offers a 24-hour escort service to vehicle or residences near the campus. To request their assistance telephone 9360 7333 and allow up to 20 minutes notice for the escorting service.

8.4. If the situation is assessed as a life-threatening medical emergency call **000 ('Triple Zero')** and then inform Campus Security

For all other emergencies call Campus Security:

<u>Campus</u>	<u>Internal</u>	<u>External</u>
South Street	333	9360 7333
Rockingham	7333	9553 7333
Mandurah	5555	9582 5555

8.5. Please refer to the university Security, Safety & Wellbeing Guidelines for further information.

8.6. Emergency Contact when working alone or after hours

8.6.1. A specific person should be identified and agreed upon as the emergency contact (such as a fellow worker, supervisor, or security officer) to act as a point of contact and regular check-ins.

8.6.2. If this person is unable to reach the worker, they should escalate the concern for further action. Further action may include:

8.6.3. Contacting the worker again by different means.

8.6.4. Conducting a search for the worker.

8.6.5. Contacting emergency services.

9. Activities where working after-hours or alone is not permitted

9.1. Some work is too hazardous to be undertaken after-hours or when working alone. This includes activities involving:

9.1.1. Using high-risk equipment such as forklifts, saws, cranes, or hoists.

9.1.2. Hydrofluoric acid.

- 9.1.3. Explosive and potentially unstable substances.
- 9.1.4. Any hazardous chemical with a risk rating of 3 in Chemwatch.
- 9.1.5. Use of large volumes of hazardous substances.
- 9.1.6. Disposal of hazardous substances.
- 9.1.7. Naked flames associated with flammable solvents.
- 9.1.8. Low temperature environments (such as cool rooms, freezers).
- 9.1.9. High-powered, fast-moving machinery or equipment in laboratories (including maintenance of this equipment).
- 9.1.10. Heights or confined spaces.
- 9.1.11. A risk of asphyxiation, unconsciousness, entrapment, amputation, electrocution, being struck by moving equipment or entanglement.
- 9.1.12. Working with large or aggressive animals.
- 9.1.13. Any other work activity is restricted by risk assessment.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure risk management/assessments are undertaken with controls implemented prior to the working alone or after-hours task being undertaken. • Staff are provided with suitable levels of training and instruction with competence verified. • Review the communication strategy, emergency response procedures to ensure they are adequate prior to approving working alone or in isolation work. • Where <u>not satisfied</u> that a worker is suitably qualified, trained and has adequately identified and controlled the risks associated with conducting the work alone or in isolation, request the worker to resubmit their proposal/risk assessment or impose specific conditions of approval. • Approve/authorize working alone or in isolation in accordance with this procedure. • Implement this procedure where it is relevant to their area of responsibility. • Ensure appropriate means of communication are provided and ensure that all communication is able to be maintained. • Ensure hazards and incidents are reported via the online reporting system of the university

Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to complete a risk assessment for associated duties with working alone or in isolation, in consultation with their manager or supervisor • Follow all identified control measures. • Participate in any identified training. • Review university emergency response plans and establish any additional measures required to ensure you are able to respond or be assisted in any reasonably foreseeable emergency situation and include in the risk assessment. • Establish and maintain a suitable method of communication. • Maintain regular contact with the designated contact person when this is a requirement • Employees working alone or in isolation must always carry their staff identification with them. • Where necessary, obey any evacuation signals and remain at the muster point • Ensure SOP's for isolated work are followed • Never undertake isolated work if the task requires more than one person
Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and support to the business in relation to the risk management process and this procedure. • Provide input into risk assessment, when required and development of appropriate SOP's • Review and update this procedure. • Ensure procedures in place to manage risk. • All hazards and incidents are controlled too as low as reasonably practicable
Senior Manager (Head of school & Director level or above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for ensuring legislation relating to working alone and isolated work is implemented. • Resources are in place to ensure that any work that is required to be undertaken by a person working alone or out of hours can be completed safely and in accordance with this procedure
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist/support any staff walk safely to their vehicle option • Access will be at the discretion of the Security personnel. • Regular building checks

Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with Murdoch University policies and procedures on contractor management and working alone or in isolation. • Undertake Murdoch University's contractor induction
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have completed appropriate induction training, including emergency evacuation and other necessary emergency procedures. • Must obtain their supervisor's authorisation to perform any designated high-risk work. • For all high-risk activities which have been approved by the manager or supervisor, notify Murdoch University security of their presence in that location, and the expected duration of their work there.

Governance

Approval Authority	Senior Leadership Team
Owner	Chief People Officer
Legislation mandating compliance	<p><i>Western Australian – Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i></p> <p><i>Western Australian – Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022</i></p> <p><i>Publication - Guidance working alone</i></p>
Category	Primarily a function of management
Related University Legislation and Policy Documents	<p><i>Health and Safety Policy</i></p> <p><i>Work, Health and Safety Risk Management Procedure</i></p>
Date effective	30/06/2025
Review date	30/06/2028

Revision History

Approved/Amended	Date Approved	Resolution No. (if applicable)
Approved	30/06/2025	

Please refer to the electronic copy in the Policy and Procedure Manager to ensure you are referring to the latest version.