



# Working Alone

## Information for SIAST Students

### 1. What is working alone?

Under section 35 of *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, “to work alone,” means *to work at a worksite as the only worker of the employer or contractor at that worksite, in circumstances where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of injury, ill health or emergency.*

Saskatchewan occupational health and safety laws require your employer to protect you if you must work alone. Use the information in this fact sheet to protect yourself.

### 2. How can the employer protect a worker who is working alone?

Some activities, such as trenching, entering confined spaces, using elevated work platforms, and diving underwater are so dangerous that no employee can perform them alone. Where a worker is allowed to work alone, the employer must take the following safety precautions.

1. Identify potentially dangerous jobs that involve working alone, such as workers at risk of violence and those who perform hazardous jobs, such as working at height.
2. Identify the hazards involved in the work, such as working with dangerous equipment, chemicals, or biohazards.
3. Assess the risks of each hazard causing harm. Think about:
  - What could go wrong (such as the illness and injuries that could result from the hazards of the work)?
  - How quickly could a problem develop, and how serious could the consequences be?
  - Can a properly trained and equipped worker who is working alone control the risks?

4. Inform workers about the risks. Train workers who may have to work alone to follow requirements and manage potential emergencies.
5. Reduce the risks, for example by:
  - setting competency standards (training, experience, or other);
  - limiting or prohibiting dangerous tasks;
  - implementing written safe work practices;
  - requiring workers to use appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing;
  - providing emergency supplies for use in extreme weather; and
  - regularly contacting anyone working alone or in isolation.
6. Implement an emergency response plan. Think about:
  - What emergencies could develop (fires, explosions, serious injuries, etc)?
  - What people, equipment, and supplies will be needed to respond?
  - How long will it take to rescue a worker who is working alone?
  - How will casualties be transported to safety?
  - How long will it take to reach the nearest medical facility?
  - What happens if something goes wrong with the emergency response plan?

### 3. How can the employer communicate with a worker who is working alone?

The employer must have a communications system, including: radio, regular phone or cellular phone communication; or any other means that provides effective communication in view of the risks involved.

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To contact the Occupational Health and Safety Division:

Visit our website: [www.labour.gov.sk.ca](http://www.labour.gov.sk.ca).

**Regina** call: 1-800-567-7233 (toll-free). **Saskatoon** call: 1-800-667-5023 (toll-free)

#### **4. How can the employer monitor the safety of a worker who is working alone?**

Methods include:

- periodic visits and observations by the supervisor;
- regular contacts with security staff or other workers;
- video surveillance; or scheduled telephone, cell or radio contacts;
- automatic warning devices that trigger if movement or signals are not detected within a set time from the worker who is working alone; and
- phone calls or other checks after the shift to see that the worker who was working alone has reached the base or home safely.

#### **5. How can you protect yourself?**

If you work alone:

- use the training, equipment, and communications system provided by the employer
- consider the hazards and risks associated with working in isolated or remote areas and prepare accordingly
- keep the vehicles you use regularly maintained and stocked with emergency supplies – know how to perform basic emergency repairs, such as changing tires
- keep your first aid training and supplies current
- make sure someone knows where you will be and how to reach you
- set up a schedule for contacts and communications
- have a personal emergency plan in case something goes wrong
- don't take unnecessary risks