

Chemical Safety Guidance

February 2020

Laboratory Work with Chemicals: Lone Working Risk Assessment

Occupational Health and Safety Service
HSD070C (rev 2)



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**



SUMMARY OF TASK / Reference to Safe Operating Procedure / Existing Risk Assessment(s):	
LOCATION(S):	PERSONNEL INVOLVED:
NAME OF ASSESSOR:	DATE OF ASSESSMENT:
SIGNATURE:	REVIEW DATE:

This form is intended to help you assess the risks that lone working in a laboratory may present in ADDITION to those risks identified in an existing assessment. Working alone, i.e. 'not in sight or sound of another individual' in a laboratory, does not in itself automatically present a high risk activity, however, if working alone on potentially hazardous procedures and/or with potentially hazardous substances it may become so. Clearly in many laboratory situations it would be impracticable to insist that all activities comply with the sight and sound principle at all times. However, it is always important to consider whether working alone in a laboratory could foreseeably increase risk(s) to an unacceptable level, if it could then a lone working risk assessment should be carried out. Where lone working involves working out of hours then individual Departmental and University procedures must also be followed (see HSD056M).

Is there an existing Risk Assessment for this activity in this location?	YES ☐	NO ☐
If NO, complete the appropriate risk assessment(s) before continuing.		
If YES, attach the relevant risk assessments to this form and continue to assess the lone working aspects.		

To assist in the risk assessment process, a list of potential hazards can be found in Appendix 1.

1.	WORKPLACE AND CONDITIONS:	YES	NO	ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES:
a.	Does the laboratory itself present any special risks to a person working alone?			
b.	Is there safe access and egress (exit), including consideration of emergencies?			
c.	Can all equipment / apparatus be used and operated safely by a lone worker?			
d.	Can all substances / hazardous materials be safely handled / used by a lone person?			
e.	Is there a risk of accidental release of material, which could cause acute injury?			
f.	Is there a risk of accidental release of material, which would need extensive decontamination?			
g.	Can a lone person safely do any manual handling that may be required?			
h.	Are inexperienced workers at a higher risk due to a lack of experience, knowledge, etc?			
i.	Are adequate first-aid facilities available (access to First Aiders, first-aid kits etc.)?			
j.	In an emergency can help easily find and reach the lone worker?			
k.	If working 'off-site' or in other non-laboratory situations - also see HSD052M for further University guidance on lone working.			

2.	COMMUNICATION AND SUPERVISION:	YES	NO	ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES:
a.	Are there arrangements for regular contact between the lone worker and the supervisor / colleague?			
b.	Are automatic personal movement / inactivity monitoring & warning alarms* appropriate?			
c.	Are automatic hazardous substance release monitoring & warning alarms* appropriate? (e.g. oxygen depletion alarms; toxic or flammable gas release alarms).			
d.	Is there easy access to emergency communication at all times, are there emergency phones; if so where are they?			
3.	THE LONE WORKER:	YES	NO	ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES:
a.	Does the lone worker have any medical condition that increases the risk of working alone? Including consideration of personal response in emergencies.			
b.	Is the lone worker sufficiently experienced in the process in order that they can safely carry out the work alone?			
c.	Has necessary information, instruction and training been given to the lone worker?			
d.	Is the lone worker considered competent to carry out the work alone?			
e.	Has the lone worker been provided with suitable emergency training including knowing at least two emergency exit routes?			
4.	OTHER FACTORS (please specify):	YES	NO	ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES:

* Where 'alarms' are fitted consideration must be given to the audibility of alarms, the potential need for visual beacons and the location of repeater alarms to alert others/supervisors of an incident in the area of the 'lone worker'.

All those persons undertaking the lone working as risk assessed above must have read and understood the assessment including relevant emergency procedures, agreed to provide any information required in the assessment, agreed to implement the identified control measures and signed below to accept their responsibilities and the validity of information given by them.

5.	NAME(S) OF PERSON CARRYING OUT THE TASK:	SIGNATURE OF PERSON CARRYING OUT THE TASKS
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Appendix 1: Generic Hazard Identification Check List for Risk Assessments

Assessor:

Location:

Date:

Consider the activity and work area, then identify if any of the hazards listed below are significant and therefore need to be considered in a risk assessment. This alphabetic list should not be considered as exhaustive, therefore also consider any other risks identified as relevant.

	Potential Hazards (A-Z)	YES	NO	COMMENTS:
1.	Condition of buildings & glazing			
2.	Confined space			
3.	Cryogenics			
4.	Display screen equipment			
5.	Electrical equipment			
6.	Falling objects			
7.	Fall of person (from work at height)			
8.	Fieldtrips / field work			
9.	Fire hazards			
10.	Flammable substances			
11.	Genetic modification			
12.	Hazardous biological agents			
13.	Hazardous chemical substances			
14.	Heating & ventilation			
15.	Housekeeping problems			
16.	Lasers (work with)			
17.	Layout, storage, space, obstructions			
18.	Lifting equipment			
19.	Lighting levels			
20.	Lone working / work out of hours			
21.	Machinery hazards			
22.	Magnetic fields			
23.	Manual handling operations			
24.	Noise or Vibration			
25.	Occupational stress			
26.	Outdoor work / extreme weather			
27.	Pressure systems / vessels			
28.	Pressurised gases			
29.	Radiation sources (sealed or unsealed)			
30.	Sharps			
31.	Slips, Trips & Falls			
32.	Use of portable tools / equipment			
33.	Vehicles / driving at work			
34.	Violence to staff / verbal assault			
35.	Waste disposal			
36.	Welfare facilities			
37.	Other (please specify):			



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