

LONE WORKING

Scope

- This procedure applies to anyone working, studying or taking part in any activity managed by LSHTM and includes staff, students, contractors and visitors.
- The procedure is intended to address the lone worker risks associated with the variety of work carried out at LSHTM.

LSHTM Arrangements that apply to this procedure

Flexible Working Arrangements: Policy and Procedure document.

Definitions

Work: paid employment (on a fixed or permanent contract), studying, carrying out research, volunteering to carry out LSHTM business.

Manager/Supervisor: a person who has a duty to manage any aspect of the work activities of the department, where it is carried out by an employee or student, e.g., line manager, principle investigator, research group leader etc.

Lone working: working without close or direct supervision or remote from colleagues, where colleagues may be in the next room or on other floors in the same building. Lone working can be in fixed locations or between various different work locations (laboratory, office etc). Lone working can occur at any time, either during normal working hours or out of hours.

Normal working hours: defined by Deans of Faculty as times when first aiders and fire wardens are at optimum levels. This must take account of extended working hours such as events, exhibitions and exam times as well as normal LSHTM closures such as Christmas, Easter and Bank Holidays.

Out of hours: times when first aiders and fire wardens are below optimum levels such as evenings, early mornings, weekends and public holidays. Please note that out of hours work may not always be lone working.

Risk associated with working alone

- unable to summon help as a result of injury, ill health or emergency
- unable to carry out a task safely while alone

Responsibilities

Heads of Departments must ensure that there are arrangements in place to identify and control the risk arising from lone working including:

- A definition of normal working hours
- A list of Departmental activities which must not be carried out while alone (see table 2 for guidance)
- Authorisation of routine specified lone working permitted
- Procedure for authorising non-routine lone working activities

Managers/Supervisors must ensure that

- Non-routine lone working is avoided where possible – see table 2 for necessary additional controls that should be in place if such work is undertaken.
- Time spent working alone is planned
- Risk assessments for the work state the additional controls necessary if the work is carried out alone
- Control measures identified are implemented
- Risk assessments are reviewed

Assessing the risk

Managers must consider the following when deciding if lone working is to be permitted:

Individual vulnerabilities

- Are any individuals especially at risk when working alone
- Is the person medically fit to work alone? Managers who have concerns about an individual's fitness for lone working should refer them to Occupational Health after consultation with their HR partner.
- Experience of the individual wishing to work alone
- Individuals with impaired vision, hearing or mobility
- Individuals whose first language is not English; have all emergency procedures been fully explained?

Work patterns

- Some work may begin in normal working hours and continue out of hours
- Continuous experiments
- Flexible work pattern (Flexible Working Arrangements: Policy and Procedure document).
- Working at home (Flexible Working Arrangements: Policy and Procedure document).

Location or work area

The work may be carried out in a location managed by LSHTM, another employer or external location. The work may involve more than one work area

- Office, laboratory, workshop
- Store room, plant room, cold room, server room
- Home of research subject, vehicle
- See Travel Policy for overseas locations

Work activity

If the task is to be carried out by someone working alone the risk assessment must consider the hazards of being alone in addition to the hazards involved with the work itself – see table 2 for further help.

Managing the risks

Managers must ensure that:

- The lone worker understands the risks and precautions involved in their work and has enough experience to work without direct supervision
- The lone worker has all information needed to deal with any emergencies (see table 1).

Managers should ensure that one, or more, of the following controls are in place depending on the level of risk:

- A start/finish time has been agreed for out of hours lone working
- The lone worker informs their supervisor that work has started/finished
- Periodic check by the supervisor or person designated by the supervisor are made at agreed intervals, e.g., hourly. Checks can be in person, by telephone or two-way radio.
- Lone worker periodically checks in with supervisor or designated person
 - NB ensure that the chosen means of communication works in the area it is to be used; mobile phone reception is not building wide.
- A procedure is in place to deal with failure to contact lone worker at agreed intervals
- A record is kept of the information that has been provided to individuals who work alone.

Review the risk assessment

Managers must review the risk assessment periodically, at intervals determined by the risk assessment

- If an incident or accident occurs
- If something changes, such as
 - People, equipment, location
 - Is it still necessary for the work to be carried out alone

Table 1: Lone Worker Emergency Procedures

Arrangements for normal working hours may be different or need to be supplemented when working out of hours.

	Normal working hours	Additional procedures for out of hours work
How to contact security	<p>Ensure the lone worker knows the internal emergency number and if using a mobile (555, 0207 927 2200)</p> <p>If work is off site, such as field work, then contact 999</p> <p>In some situations contacting security may not be possible / practical and a lone worker alarm may be appropriate.*</p> <p>If a panic button is installed staff must know how/when to use it and what to expect as a response.</p>	<p>Ensure that the passenger lift alarms / telephones are responded to out of hours.</p> <p>Access to the building is controlled – swipe card.</p> <p>Consider person security and transport arrangements when leaving the workplace late at night.</p>
How to raise the alarm on discovering a fire	As displayed on fire action notices	
Evacuation procedures	As displayed on fire action notices	<p>Ensure normal evacuation routes are available out of hours – building maintenance may be taking place out of hours.</p> <p>A log book for out of hours lone workers is in reception and should be signed when entering and leaving – allows security / fire brigade to account for building occupants.</p> <p>NB this will only be effective if lone workers enter and leave via the main reception (including cyclists) and occupants who entered the building prior to the commencement of out of hours period sign the log.</p>
Accidents / incidents	Ensure lone worker knows how to report accidents and incidents (including non-injury incidents)	Can be done the next day if not practical out of hours
First aid arrangements	Ensure lone worker knows how to contact the nearest first aider	One member of security is first aided trained; ensure lone worker knows how to contact them.

* Features include; an automatic alert to a pre-arranged responder, operation is discreet, activated if worker stops moving, working periodic response, e.g., 20 minute intervals.

Table 2: Lone working – activities guidance

The following list is intended to provide guidance for Heads of Department when preparing Departmental arrangements	
NO	Reasons why work cannot be conducted while alone: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. risk control measures cannot be implemented in individual is working alone, e.g., footing a ladder 2. when emergency procedures rely on the presence of others, e.g., operating emergency stop buttons, implementing/assisting spill procedures, responding to monitor alarms 3. legal requirement preventing work being carried out alone 4. worker is under 18 years old
POSSIBLE	5. emergency procedures (see table 1) and additional control measures
YES	6. emergency procedures (see table 1)

ACTIVITY		Additional control measures
Work with equipment powered off 3 phase electricity or other high energy source	2	
At or near exposed live electricity conductors	2	
Work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large volumes of hazardous liquids, e.g., corrosives, flammables • asphyxiants, e.g., carbon dioxide • decanting cryogenic substances • substances that react violently, e.g., explosive, toxic gas evolved 	2	
Working in containment level 3 facilities out of hours – initiating experiments, removal of cryovials, any other procedure not covered below*	2	
Working in the BSF out of hours – initiating experiments, any other procedure not covered below**	2	
Use of blowlamps, gas/plasma cutting or welding equipment	2	
Confined spaces, e.g., enclosed drains or sewers, service voids	2	
Young persons (under 18)	4	
Lifting or moving heavy loads	1	
Changing gas cylinders	2	
Re-filling of Liquid Nitrogen tanks	2	
Work above or near water, e.g., tanks, ponds, rivers, canals etc	5	Controls identified after a detailed assessment of local conditions
Interviewing members of the public/research participants in their home or isolated locations	5	Interviewee vetted and/or interviewer not vulnerable Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Class 3b lasers and above	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Working in containment level 3 facilities out of hours – tissue culture (except the removal of cryovials), pathogen maintenance, use of plate reader of FACSCalibur	5	CL3 procedure for access out of hours to be followed https://intra.lshtm.ac.uk/safety/laboratory/pathogens.html Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Working in the BSF out of hours - taking of blood films, dosing, imaging, checking units	5	BSF procedure for access out of hours to be followed

		Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Risk of violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception work • Events such as exhibitions, social events • Leaving or travelling between work locations out of hours 	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Contractors appointed by and managed by the Department	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Work at height	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Taught course student work	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Isolated/remote locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storeroom, plant room 	5	Periodic checks arranged Start / finish confirmed
Checking equipment/experiments left running for extended periods	6	
Work with microscopes	6	
Laboratory work involving low risk material preparation	6	
Office based work	6	
Maintenance of workshop machinery	6	Machines must be isolated.