UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

UOW SAFE@WORK

Working Alone and After-Hours Guidelines

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1. Introduction

The University of Wollongong (UOW) is committed to managing health and safety risks through the effective implementation of the WHS Management System (WHSMS).

The level of risk associated with activities and tasks will increase when they are undertaken by personnel who work after-hours and/or work alone. Working after-hours and/or alone increases risk because of a reduced ability for the provision of services and resources that can assist with the control of risk.

2. Scope

This document covers any person at the University required to work alone for any period of time and/or where a situation arises that they may have to work after-hours.

NOTE: Field trips or work in remote locations away from the University forms part of the Fieldwork and Off-Campus Activities Guidelines and shall be referred to for guidance in these instances.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 EXECUTIVE DEANS, DIRECTORS AND HEADS OF UNITS

Executive Deans, Directors and Heads of Units are responsible for ensuring:

- Legislation relating to remote or isolated work is implemented within their faculty/division, and
- 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 guideline.

3.2 MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that any work undertaken by a person working alone or after-hours is in accordance with this guideline, including:

- Ensuring risk management activities are undertaken with controls implemented prior to the working alone or after-hours task being undertaken.
- Personnel undertaking such activities are provided with suitable levels of training and instruction with competence verified.
- Approving working alone or after-hours activities in accordance with this guideline.

3.3 WORKERS AND STUDENTS

Workers and students who undertake working alone or after-hours activities in accordance with these guidelines are responsible completing a risk assessment for the associated activities, in consultation with their supervisor, following all identified control measures and participating in any identified training.

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4. Definitions

After-hours	A period when normal weekday operations cease. As this varies from area to area, in general anything after 10pm is classed as after-hours. Exceptions to this include: - Computer labs where normal operations cease at 12:00 midnight. - Activities which have a risk rating of HIGH. For the purpose of this guideline, normal hours for high-risk activities are considered 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). Any times outside of this will be considered after-hours for these activities.
Working alone	Work carried out by a person where there are no means of visual or direct verbal contact with another person.
Remote or isolated work	Work that is isolated from the assistance of other persons because of the location, time or the nature of the work.

5. Referenced or Related Documents

- Fieldwork and Off-Campus Activities Guidelines
- SafeZone webpage with link to download the SafeZone App
- SafetyNet
- UOW SafeZone App – After-Hours Check-in Factsheet
- UOW WHS Risk Management Guidelines
- WHS Risk Management webpage
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017
- Working in Confined Spaces Guideline

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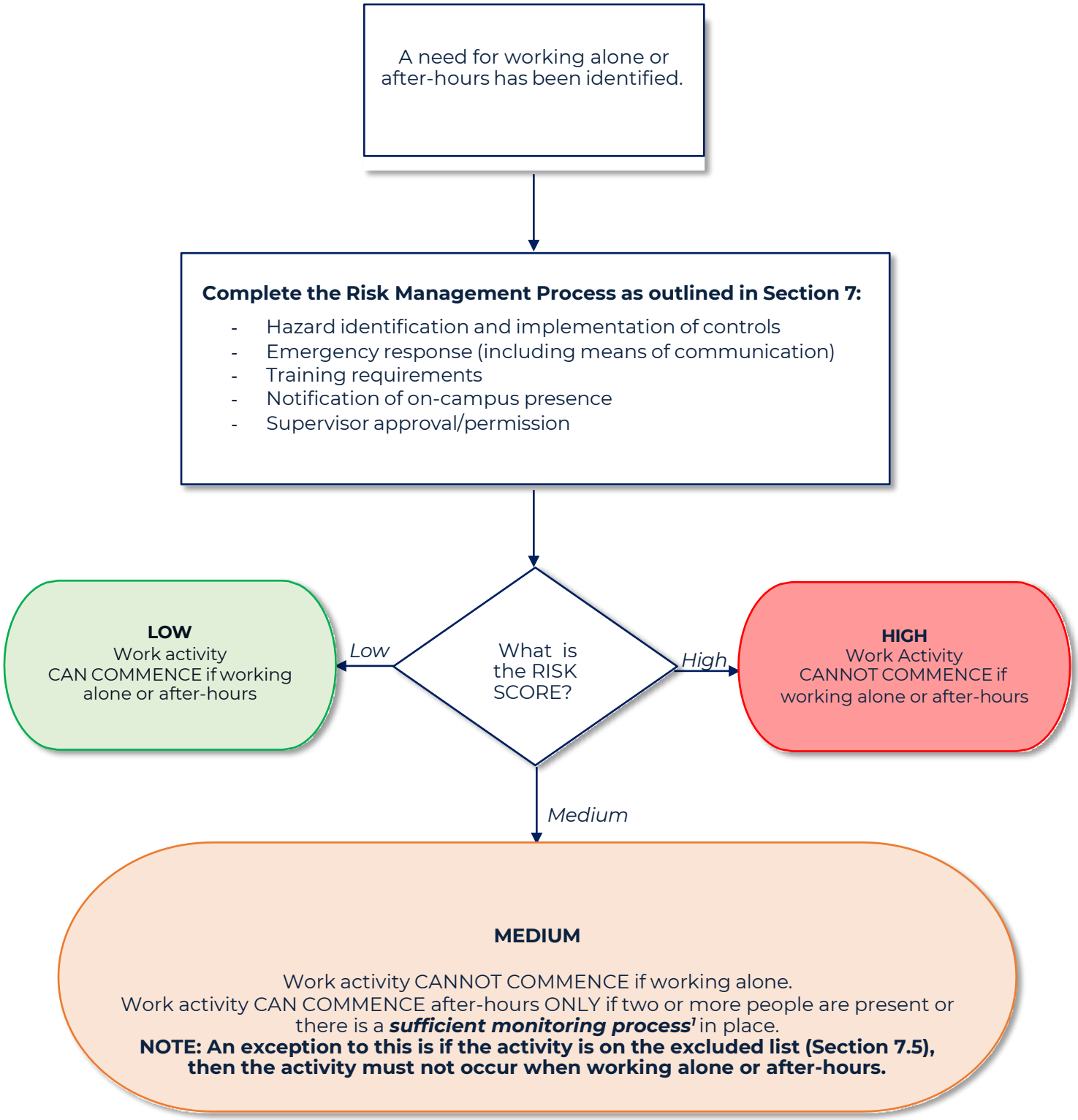
6. Process flow for working alone or after-hours

Use Figure 1 to assist in determining the requirements for working alone or after-hours and whether the work can proceed in the required scenario.



Note [1] A ***sufficient monitoring process*** shall be determined through the risk assessment process. Some examples include setting up a system for regular check-ins (phone or in person)

Figure 1 – Process flow for working alone or after-hours

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7. Risk Management Process

If you are required to attend work outside of normal working hours, you must have completed all appropriate training and inductions for your work, completed a risk assessment, including considering all of the required support services, and have permission to do so from your Supervisor or Manager. The following sections provide further detail regarding the risk management process for working alone and after-hours.

7.1 RISK ASSESSMENT

When work is required to be carried out alone or after-hours a risk assessment (in SafetyNet) must be completed so that hazards can be identified and risks can be controlled in accordance with the UOW WHS Risk Management Guidelines.

The risk assessment shall consider:

a. The hazards associated with the task, assessment of the associated risk and the appropriate controls to be implemented to ensure the safety of the person.

   Refer to Appendix 1 for guidance in identifying hazards.

b. Emergency response procedures should an accident or incident occur, including a means of communication.

c. Whether the worker or student has received the required information, instruction and training to competently carry out the work.

d. How the workers or students' after-hours presence will be captured when on UOW premises.

   The preferred option is to use the Check-in/Check-out functionality of the SafeZone App. *Additional information is provided on the SafeZone App – After-Hours Check-in Factsheet.*

   An alternative control measure will need to be put in place and approved by the individual's supervisor in the event the SafeZone App cannot be used. An example may be, worker or student to notify their supervisor upon arrival at UOW (including expected duration of visit) and then when leaving.

7.2 APPROVING WORKING ALONE AND AFTER-HOURS ACTIVITIES

The supervisor is responsible for approving working alone or after-hours access. Approval shall only be granted when the implemented controls are aligned with the Risk Score/Work Scenario Matrix in Table 1.

Table 1 – Risk Score/Work Scenario Matrix

	Risk Score		
Work Scenario	**LOW**	**MEDIUM**	**HIGH**
Alone	**YES**	**NO**	**NO**
After-Hours	**YES**	**YES –** if more than one person is present, or a ***sufficient monitoring process***[1] is in place; AND the activity is not on the excluded activities list (Section 7.5) Note [1] A ***sufficient monitoring process*** shall be determined through the risk assessment process. Some examples may include setting up a system for regular check-ins (phone or in person) or real time video monitoring.	**NO**

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7.3 EMERGENCY CONTACT WHEN WORKING ALONE OR AFTER-HOURS

In the event of an emergency when working alone or after-hours, call Security on 4221 4900 or raise an alert with the SafeZone App.

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

7.4 SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

If you are attending work after-hours:

- Ensure that the doors of buildings are securely closed after entering and exiting.
- Ensure that doors to internal areas are secured on leaving.
- Ensure you are familiar with emergency procedures and contact numbers (this should be included in your risk assessment)
- Do not allow anyone else to use your keys, access cards or security codes.
- Do not provide access to buildings to unauthorised persons.
- Report any breaches of security or suspicious behaviour to UOW Security using the SafeZone App or by calling 4221 4555 (or 4221 4900 if it is considered an emergency).

7.5 ACTIVITIES WHERE WORKING AFTER-HOURS OR ALONE IS NOT PERMITTED

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

- Hydrofluoric acid
- Explosive and potentially unstable substances
- Any hazardous chemical with a risk rating of red in ChemAlert
- Use of large volumes of hazardous substances
- Disposal of hazardous substances
- Naked flames associated with flammable solvents
- Low temperature environments (e.g., cool rooms, freezers). *Note; if these environments are fitted with emergency response buttons and the risk score is deemed low, then low temperature environments may be accessed briefly for the purpose of collecting/returning research materials*.
- High-powered, fast moving machinery or equipment (including maintenance of this equipment)
- Heights or confined spaces
- Working with molten metals
- A risk of asphyxiation, unconsciousness, entrapment, amputation, electrocution, being struck by moving equipment or entanglement.

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8. Version Control Table

VERSION NO.	DATE RELEASED	APPROVED BY	AMENDMENT
1	November 2003	Manager WHS	Document created.
2	October 2006	Manager WHS	Incorporated two guidelines, Working Alone and Working after-hours.
3	January 2010	Manager WHS	Scheduled review, minor changes only.
4	August 2010	Manager WHS	Document updated to incorporate the Personnel name change to Human Resources Division.
5	March 2012	Manager WHS	Scheduled review, minor changes only.
6	June 2013	Manager WHS	WHS name update
7	April 2015	Manager WHS	Scheduled review – document simplified to minimise content.
8	July 2016	Manager WHS	Minor amendment to Appendix 1
9	April 2023	Manager WHS	Scheduled Review. Updated hyperlinks to WHS Act and WHS Regulation.
10	April 2024	Senior Manager WHS	Provide additional guidance regarding the risk assessment requirements. Added the use of SafeZone or contact security when on UOW Campus after-hours. Remove Appendix 2. More clearly define responsibilities and add a list of activities where working alone or after-hours is not permitted. Add risk score/approval matrix and security precautions. Add process flow chart (Figure 1) to help determine working alone and after-hours requirements.
11	Feb 2025	Senior Manager WHS	Update hyperlinks

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Appendix 1: Working Alone or After-Hours – Risk Assessment Checklist

This checklist may assist in the identification of hazards and risks of a person working alone. Note, this is a guide only. The risk assessment must be documented in SafetyNet.

CONSIDERATIONS	YES/NO OR DETAIL
Length of time the person may be working alone	
How long would the person need to be alone to finish this job?	
What is a reasonable time for the person to be alone?	
Is it reasonable for the person to be alone at all?	
Is it lawful for the person to be alone? For example, confined spaces.	
The time of day when a person may be working alone	
Is there increased risk at certain times of day?	
Communication	
What forms of communication does the person have access to?	
Is voice communication essential for the safety of the person?	
Will the emergency communication system work properly in all situations?	
If communication systems are vehicle-based, what arrangements are there to cover the person when he or she is away from the vehicle?	
The worker has the SafeZone check in capability available?	
The location of the work	
Is the work in a remote location?	
What is the form of transport? Bikes (two, three or four wheels) or other forms of transport.	
Is the vehicle fitted with emergency supplies, such as adequate drinking water?	
What is likely to happen if there is a vehicle breakdown?	
Will the person be required to leave his or her vehicle for long periods of time?	
What first aid equipment is available for immediate treatment? For example, a first aid kit in the vehicle.	
If first aid equipment is vehicle-based, what arrangements are there to cover	
The person when he or she is away from the vehicle?	
What level of first aid training is required for the person to be able to use the first aid equipment?	
The nature of the work	
Is there adequate information and instruction for the person to be able to work alone safely?	
What machinery, tools and equipment may be used?	

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CONSIDERATIONS	**YES/NO OR DETAIL**
Is equipment and machinery maintained so that it is safe to use?	
Is there high-risk activity? For example, heights, electricity, hazardous chemicals or equipment.	
Is there likely to be work in a confined space (refer to UOW Working in Confined Spaces Guideline)	
Is fatigue likely to increase risk (for example, with long hours driving a vehicle or operating machinery)?	
Is there an increased risk of violence or aggression when workers are alone?	
Can environmental factors affect the safety of the worker? For example, is the person likely to be exposed to extremes of temperature?	
Is there risk of attack by an animal, including reptiles, insects and sea creatures?	
Is there an effective system for checking that all protective clothing and equipment and emergency equipment is packed and in good working order?	
Are there procedures for regular contact with the person who works alone?	
If the person is working inside a locked building, how will emergency services gain access if the person is unable to let them in? For example, night cleaners who work alone.	
The competencies and characteristics of the person who is to work alone	
Are you aware of anything in the person's ethnic, cultural or religious background that is likely to increase risk if he or she works alone. For example, long periods of fasting where the lack of food and water intake may increase the risk of ill health in very hot weather.	
Is there anything that would interfere with the person's ability to contact someone in an emergency?	
Are there factors relating to the person's age that are likely to increase risk?	
What is the person's general behaviour and level of psychological maturity?	
Is the person physically capable of completing all work activity alone?	
Are you aware of a pre-existing medical condition that may increase risk?	
Is the person likely to make sound judgements about his or her own safety?	
Is the person likely to cope in unexpected and stressful situations?	
What is the person's level of work experience and training?	
Has the person had training to prepare them for working alone and, where applicable, in remote locations? For example, training for first aid, relevant administrative procedures, vehicle breakdowns, communications systems and bush survival.	
If a road vehicle is used, is the person competent to drive in off-road situations?	
Is there anything else that applies to your situation that is likely to increase risk for the person who works alone?	