



Lone Working and Out of Hours Procedure

Reviews and Revisions

Date	Reason	Reviewer	Next review date	Approved by
11/02/19	Initial publication following consolidation of two procedures.	Emrys Pritchard	11/02/21	HSWMG
24/10/19	The use of the SafeZone App	Emrys Pritchard	11/02/21	HSWMG
18/03/20	Addition of working from home workstation setup guidance	Emrys Pritchard	11/02/21	HSWMG



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Overview

Northumbria University has a legal responsibility to create and maintain a healthy, safe and productive environment for students, colleagues and visitors. As part of this commitment, we reduce the need for you to work alone wherever possible. If you do need to work alone, we take all reasonable steps to keep you healthy and safe.

Here you will find information about lone working and when it is not safe to work alone. You will also learn about the requirement to assess and manage identified risks before you work alone.

Who is a Lone Worker?

You are a lone worker if you are required to carry out activities as part of your role without direct contact, assistance or supervision from others. This may include [work outside of the University's normal office hours](#), work in a remote indoor or outdoor location and mobile or homeworking, where you are contractually required to work away from the University's usual places of work.

Examples of roles which may include lone working are:

- Academic
- Researcher
- Technician
- Security
- Maintenance
- Grounds
- Cleaning
- Caretaking
- Ask 4 Help

If your normal place of work is your home, you will be classed as a home worker and the University has a duty of care to ensure that your home is risk assessed, it is the responsibility of the employee to rectify any flaws in the home highlighted by the assessment. Once the home workplace is passed as safe, it is the responsibility of the homeworker to keep it that way and take reasonable care of their health and safety. There may be occasions where you work from home, in these cases the individual is responsible for undertaking the risk assessment.

Is it safe to work alone?

Working alone is often safe providing you are competent and experienced in what you do. However, some activities are not safe to carry out alone and so it is important that we carefully consider the potential risks, so that you only carry out activities where you can normally be expected to work unsupervised safely.



You must not work alone if there is a foreseeable risk of serious accident or injury, which would require a second person to summon help or administer first aid. Specifically, this includes:

- Working in confined spaces
- Working with live electrical conductors
- Working with access equipment that cannot be footed or secured
- Working with dangerous machinery
- Working with substances hazardous to health

You must not place yourself in any potentially difficult or dangerous situations and must cooperate fully with any measures put in place by the University to ensure your safety, health and wellbeing at work.

Lone Working Responsibilities

Together we are responsible for creating a healthy and safe working environment for lone workers. Specifically:

If you are the manager of a lone worker, you will:

- Reduce the need for lone working wherever possible
- Complete a risk assessment or ensure it is completed by another competent person, with involvement from the lone worker
- Use the risk assessment to decide where to set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone
- Take steps to mitigate identified risks before lone working takes place
- Provide instruction and training so that the lone worker understands the hazards and risks and safe working procedures
- Ensure that someone is aware of the lone worker's whereabouts always and that effective communication arrangements are in place
- Consider medical issues and whether additional Occupational Health support is required.
- Ensure emergency procedures are in place so that the lone worker can seek help if needed
- Monitor reported accidents, incidents and near misses and consult on further preventative measures
- Periodically review the risk assessment with the lone worker to ensure that control measures are used and remain adequate

If you are the person conducting the lone working assessment, you will:

- Involve the lone worker in the risk assessment process and the development of safe working methods
- Carefully consider any additional risks for groups such as expectant mothers, young people and inexperienced workers
- Advise the lone worker of the findings of the assessment



- Maintain a file of all lone working assessments
- Ensure that personal data collected during lone working assessments is handled in accordance with the University's data protection policies

If you are the lone worker, you will:

- Follow the safe working arrangements developed by the University for lone working
- Take care for your own safety and that of others who might be affected by your work activity
- Familiarise yourself with the local environment and any areas that may be hazardous
- Ensure all necessary controls and relevant safeguards are in place, as identified in the risk assessment
- Avoid entering any difficult or dangerous situations and report anything suspicious to Security at the earliest opportunity
- Inform your line manager/assessor without delay of any incidents or safety concerns
- Download the Safezone app to your University smart phone or device to enable you to check in whilst undertaking lone working activities (if you use a personal device, you are strongly encouraged to download the app)

If you have contractors working alone in your area, you will:

- Notify the contractors employer regarding any risks and control measures
- Provide relevant information regarding safe methods of working, emergency procedures and danger areas

Risk Assessment

Before you work alone, we must complete a risk assessment to look methodically at what hazards you could be exposed to and whether the absence of supervision or contact with others places you at greater risk. Together we will:

- Identify the activities where you work alone
- Using the University's [principles for working safely](#), assess the potential risks of these activities to identify foreseeable hazards
- Determine what precautions we can put in place to enable you to carry out the activities safely
- Decide if the activities can be done safely by you alone, or if you require assistance or supervision
- Review the risk assessment periodically or when there has been a significant change in working practice

The risk assessment will take account your normal course of work and foreseeable emergencies such as fire, equipment failure, illness or accident.



A Risk Assessment Form can be found [here](#). Risk Categories and example assessments are outlined in the following table.

Risk Level	Assessment	Example Control Measures
Low risk	Your work may involve tasks normally undertaken in an office and does not involve the use of machinery or dangerous substances. For example, your work may involve administrative duties, work at a computer, or home working.	Lone working is permitted where a line manager and/ or University Security is aware of your location. You must have access to a telephone and be aware of fire safety arrangements.
Medium risk	Your work may involve working with members of the public, handling cash or working in areas where you may be difficult to locate or reach in the event of an emergency.	As above. Additionally, a second person must be sufficiently close by and available to make occasional visits and help if needed.
High risk	Your work may involve the operation of heavy machinery, handling of dangerous substances and chemicals, working at heights or in confined spaces or hot or cold works activities. There may be a risk of you being a victim of violence at work.	Lone working not permitted. A second trained and competent person must be in the immediate vicinity.

Principles of Working Safely

When completing a risk assessment for lone working, we consider the University's principles for working safely to help us to establish a safe system of work. These include:

Required Ability of the Individual:

- Do you have the necessary training, qualifications, knowledge and experience to carry out the work alone?
- Are you physically and mentally fit to carry out the work alone?
- Do you require any adjustments to enable you to carry out the work (e.g. a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)?
- Do you present a special risk for lone working (e.g. are you pregnant, new to role, etc.)?

Suitability of Equipment:

- Can any equipment required (including for access) be adequately controlled, lifted and handled by you?
- Can all goods, substances and materials in use be safely handled by you?
- Do you have the correct personal protective equipment?
- Is the equipment safe and of suitable quality?



Suitability of Work Environment:

- Does the work location present a special risk (e.g. unfamiliar environment, unsafe building structure or contents)?
- Is the working environment appropriate (e.g. adequate heating, lighting, ventilation)?
- Do you have access to suitable facilities (toilet, wash facilities, drinking water)?
- Is there a safe way for you to enter and exit the work area?
- Does the work activity present a special risk (e.g. handling cash, risk of violence, contact with substances and chemicals, use of equipment and machinery)?

Means of Communication:

- Does someone always know your whereabouts?
- Do you have a way to communicate when needed e.g. regular visits/ contact by the supervisor or other competent person, use of mobile phone or two-way radio, use of Safezone application, use of other tracking or monitoring devices?
- For areas of high risk, is CCTV installed or are there additional access control and personal attack systems, which are connected and monitored by Campus Services?
- How do we know that you have returned to base on completion of the task?
- Is there an emergency procedure in place in case we lose contact with you?

In Case of Injury or Emergency:

- What plans and equipment are available in the event you become ill, have an accident or there is an emergency?
- Do you have access to first aid facilities?
- Do you know how to summon help or raise the alarm?
- Do you know how to report accidents and/or near misses?

Provision of Training:

- Are you trained in the safe use of specialised equipment and processes?
- Do you know how to deal with unexpected circumstances and potential exposure to violence or aggression?
- Do you know what activities you must not carry out when working alone?

How do I gain access to the University outside of normal working hours?

Providing you have successfully completed the University's fire awareness training you can access the University outside of normal office hours by agreement with your Faculty or Service. You will find information about building opening hours [here](#). Unless otherwise stated, all buildings should normally be vacated by 10pm.

If you wish to remain at work after the normal building closure time, please inform Security on 3999.

If you wish to gain special access to a building, for example on a weekend or closure day, please complete the [Out of Hours Access Approval](#) and send a copy to Security.



When you arrive on Campus, please contact Security on extension 3999 to let them know.

Security will advise you if you can access the building normally or will accompany you to the building if an alarm needs to be unset.

Whilst on site, you must follow the safe working arrangements developed by the University for [lone working](#) and avoid entering any dangerous or difficult situations. Please carry your University smart card with you always and do not allow any unauthorised individuals to access the building.

Please contact Security immediately to inform them of any incidents or safety concerns. On leaving the building, please ensure any equipment is switched off and secured and contact Security on 3999 to let them know you are leaving.

Further Information and Support

Please contact the University's Health and Safety Team on ext. 4100 for further advice and guidance. You can find the HSE's information on Lone Working [here](#). You will also find information from acas [here](#).

The University's Personal Safety and Lone Worker Training will help you raise your awareness of your personal safety and the steps you can take to keep safe. Book your place [here](#).

All staff and students are encouraged to download and use the University's free desktop Safezone app whenever they are working out of hours. Colleagues and students working between the hours of 2200 and 0600 are required to check-in and check-out using the app. Using the app makes it easy and quick for you to contact University Security or the emergency services if you need help and helps Security to maintain safety across campus out of working hours.

The following contact numbers may also be helpful in the event of an incident or emergency:

SERVICE	University Phone	Outside or Mobile Phone
Emergency Services	9999	999
University Security- Emergency	3200	0191 227 3200
University Security- General Enquiries	3999	0191 227 3999
Police General Enquiries	(9) 0345 043043	0345 043043 (101)
Facilities & Estates Helpdesk (0700 – 1700)	4070	0191 227 4070



Appendix 1

NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY STAFF OUT OF HOURS ACCESS APPROVAL

If you wish to gain special access to a building outside of normal office hours, for example on weekends or closure days, please complete this form and send a copy to CRSecurityTeams2@northumbria.ac.uk

Employee Details:

Name:	
Faculty/ Service:	
Details of room/building to which access is required and reason for access:	
Date access required from:	
Contact Tel Number (Work):	
Contact Tel Number (Mobile):	
<p>By submitting this form to the approver, I confirm that I have read and understand the University's policy on Lone Working and have been briefed by my department on the procedures for out of hours access. I agree to use the desktop Safezone app between the hours of 2200 and 0600. I understand that my access may be withdrawn if I am found in breach of any of the procedures. I will safeguard my access card and any keys issued to me and will return keys to Security if no longer required.</p>	

Approver Details:

Name (Pro Vice-Chancellor or Director):	
<p>By submitting this form to Security, I confirm that a risk assessment has been carried out and the activity has been classed as 'low risk'. If work is classed as higher than low risk', approval to work must first be obtained from the central health and safety team. Should the nature of the employee's work change during this period, a further risk assessment will be carried out.</p> <p>I confirm that the employee named above is competent to work alone out of normal working hours and has been briefed on all procedures, including the requirement to check-in and check-out using Safezone app between the hours of 2200 and 0600.</p> <p>I understand that access will be reviewed each year. If the employee no longer requires out of hours access, or leaves the University, my department will inform the Security Manager to cancel their access facilities.</p>	



Appendix 2

WORKING FROM HOME - WORKSTATION GUIDANCE

March 2020

During the Covid-19 pandemic, as a temporary measure, certain staff may have to work from home during the next few weeks.

The guidance has some practical reminders to follow to ensure that you achieve the best workstation setup possible.

Link to the Working From Home Guidance can be found [here](#)