



POLICY:

REGULATION: EBC – Workplace Safety and Health Procedures - Working Alone

EXHIBIT:

PROCEDURES FOR PERSONS WORKING ALONE

Provincial Legislation requires where a worker is working alone, the Division shall provide and implement a plan as a means of insuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of that worker from risks arising out of, or in connection with, activities in the workplace. In most cases, the type of work that is performed by the employees of Seine River School Division is considered “low risk”. However, some employees may be required or request to work in buildings alone after regular school hours.

Employees who are working alone are required to arrange in advance a “buddy system” that requires all employees who are in a work alone situation to contact their “buddy” at a minimum two hour interval, unless the risk of the situation warrants more frequent contact. Employees should not be engaging in high risk activities, such as roof work, working in confined spaces, or other higher risk work, when working alone. Consult with your manager or school administrator or appropriate divisional staff, if you must perform higher risk tasks when working alone.

Custodians and other staff who may have to work alone as a regular part of their work assignment, will have a written plan in place and signed by their administrator/site manager, as to who they will contact a minimum of every two hours and how they will do this. A copy of this plan will be kept by the school administrator/site manager, as well as with the divisional manager, where appropriate.

Teachers and other staff who may occasionally work alone at the school must receive permission from the school administrator or site manager for each time they are working alone in the building. They must pre-determine an approximate entry and exit time, as well as the buddy contact to call every two hours within that timeframe. The Principal or site manager may refuse permission for a staff member to work in a building alone.

1.0 Purpose

This regulation applies to all employees of the SRSD including administrators, teachers, custodians, bus drivers, courier drivers, secretaries, educational assistants, casual employees; as well as visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel. The intent of this regulation is to establish procedures to follow when working alone.

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SOURCE: Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation (2015),

OTHER REFERENCE:



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2.0 Definitions

The Workplace Health and Safety Regulation (MR 217/2006) defines:

2.1 Working Alone

Working alone means the performance of any work function by a worker who:

- a) Is the only worker for that employer at that workplace at any time; and
- b) Is not directly supervised by the employer, or another person designated as a supervisor by the employer, at any time.

2.2 Working in Isolation

Working in isolation means working in circumstances where assistance is not readily available in the event of injury, ill health or emergency.

3.0 Responsibilities

3.1 Supervisors

- Identify the risks associated with a task before work commences.
- Take steps necessary to eliminate work alone situations.
- When elimination is not possible, the supervisor shall develop written work alone procedures to reduce the risk to workers.
- Train workers on the work alone procedures.
- Ensure workers are following the work alone procedures.

3.2 Employees

- Participate in the work alone process
- Follow the requirements of the safe work procedure for the task being performed
- Inform supervisor if anything changes during the performance of the task.

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4.0 Procedure

The first step is for the employer to try, so far as is reasonably practicable, to take steps to eliminate the risks to workers working alone or in isolation; this could be done by assigning two people to do a job instead of one or by scheduling work during hours when other employees will be around.

If the elimination of hazards is not possible, the employers must then try to reduce the hazards to the worker. This can be achieved by developing Safe Work Procedures; train the workers and; ensure the workers comply with the safe work procedures.

Working alone can present a high risk or low risk depending on the location, nature of work, interaction with other people and availability of emergency services in case of an incident.

High Risk activities include:

- Work in confined spaces.
- Work from heights.
- Work with electricity.
- Work with hazardous equipment (heavy equipment, unguarded equipment)
- Work with hazardous substances.
- Hot work (these are processes that can present a fire hazard, e.g. welding, soldering, cutting and brazing)
- Personnel with pre-existing medical conditions including heart problems, respiratory problems, allergies and phobias.
- Work under circumstances that might expose the worker to acts of violence.

Low Risk activities:

Low risk activities are those where is very unlikely that an incident or injury would occur and if it occurs, it would not have serious consequences. Such as:

- Driving a school bus
- Driving from one school to another within the SRSD boundaries
- Normal activities carried out by support staff
- Office work

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4.1 Developing Work Alone Safe Work Procedures

Work alone safe work procedures shall be developed by the supervisor in consultation with the worker and health and safety committee.

The purpose of the safe work procedure is to bring the hazards associated with a work alone situation to an acceptable level of risk.

The following should be considered when developing the SWP:

- a) Length of task. Time of day when the task will be performed; how long is it reasonable for the person to be working alone.
- b) Type of work to be performed. Does the work involves working with money or valuables; what tools and equipment are needed; are the tools and equipment in good working condition; what personal protective equipment is needed; will the worker be exposed to temperature extremes;
- c) Location of work to be performed. Is there a potential for animal encounters (bees, rodents); is the location of work remote; how will emergency respondents be able to reach the worker;
- d) Communication. What are the forms of communication that will be used; do the forms of communication been tested (e.g. two way radios or cell phones might not work in certain areas); how far apart should communication be established; what happens if communication fails.
- e) Worker characteristics. Has the worker received sufficient training or education in order to perform the task; does the worker have any pre-existing medical conditions.

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