

# Working Alone or in Isolation



## Overview

Working alone is described as any situation where the worker is alone and unable to get immediate assistance. This normally refers to afterhours work but it also applies to normal school hours where staff cannot be seen or heard by another person (working in isolation).

## What is the risk?

The main hazard of working alone relates to the fact that no one is there in the event of an emergency. This may increase the likelihood and consequences of an accident such as, slips, trips and falls or the sudden onset of a medical condition (e.g. heart attack). Exposure to violence and poor access to emergency assistance are the two main risks when working alone.

## Who is at risk?

There are a number of roles in schools that may require working alone or in isolation from contact with other workers. These may include:

- Teachers
- Administration staff
- Maintenance/ground staff
- Contractors

## Suggested strategies for staff working alone

If staff are required or intend to work alone, the following strategies should be considered:

- Identifying situations where people may be working alone or in isolation from others
- Implementing appropriate pre cautionary measures for any tasks that are identified as high risk (e.g. hazardous chemicals, working at heights or operating hazardous equipment or machinery)
- An authorised person is notified of the planned work, when it will commence and the expected completion time
- An easily accessible means of communication to gain assistance in an emergency is available (e.g. mobile phone)
- Undertake required personal security measures (e.g. lock doors, school gates, walk in well-lit areas).

## Resources

- Working Alone or in Isolation Checklist
- WorkSafe Working Alone Information Sheet