



### Standard Operating Procedure: Working Alone in the Laboratory

**1. Purpose:** to provide step by step guidance about precautions to take if you are working alone in the laboratory.

---

**2. Scope:** applies to all students, staff and faculty working alone in the laboratory.

---

**3. Prerequisites:** You must be trained by an experienced person in your lab or by Stores personnel.

---

**4. Responsibilities:** it is everybody responsibility to follow the SOP and take required actions in order to ensure safety.

---

**6. Procedure:**

---

- Avoid working alone after business hours or during statutory holidays whenever possible
- Must obtain supervisors' approval prior to working alone
- Working alone/ after-hours approval MUST consider the individuals: experience level, hazards involved with the work, possibility of incident preventing an individual from being able to call for help, and accessibility to emergency assistance
- Conduct a risk assessment (refer to section 7 below) to identify hazards associated with working alone.
- Identify any hazards and take required actions to eliminate them if possible and ensure to minimize the risks
- When working alone let someone know that you will be working alone and request that person to check on you regularly.

U of T offers the following **Working Alone Services**

- Hours of Operation
  - Monday to Friday 10:00pm – 7:00am
  - 24 hours during the weekends and statutory holidays
- How does it Work?
  - Call the Campus Police at 905-569-4333 to register
  - Services provided include:
    - Campus Police will visit or telephone you during the period you request
    - In the event of an emergency, Campus Police will contact and advise you on the appropriate procedures to follow
    - Campus Police will arrange for an escort to your vehicle or the subway

**DO NOT WORK ALONE WITHOUT SOMEBODY KNOWING**

- If an emergency occurs, immediately contact campus police (905-569-4333), if critical personal injury call 911. For more information refer to the [Emergency Response SOP](#)
- In case of spills follow the chemical spills SOP instructions.
- Inform your supervisor.

**7. Risk Assessment:**

---

**HIGH RISK – DO NOT WORK ALONE**

*Examples of High Risk activities*

- Hot work where a fire watch is required
- Work with pyrogenic chemicals
- Open flame associated with flammable solvents
- Work with acutely toxic material (e.g. cyanides, fumigants, hydrofluoric acid) as described in Safety Data Sheet (SDS)
- Other tasks which based on hazard analysis are deemed to require more than one person for safety reasons

**Moderate Risk – Recommended to Have an Individual Nearby**

*Examples of Moderate Risk activities*

- Risk Group 2 Biohazard labs
- Radioactive materials (above exempt quantities)

- Large volumes of chemicals
- X-rays
- Exposed, energized electrical systems

#### Low Risk – Individuals Can Work Alone

##### *Examples of low risk activities*

- Routine office work or study
- Laboratory work with minimal risk (analytical equipment, monitoring equipment or process, work not involving hazardous materials)

Prepared by Maya Batey.

Adapted from; University of Waterloo [Working Alone Guideline](#)

Reviewed by Grace Flock, Director of Operations and Technical Services (DOTS).

Revised for University of Toronto Mississauga by Rocsana Pancescu (Chemistry Laboratory Coordinator, Davis Building, UTM Campus)