Working Alone Meeting Kit

WORKING ALONE

A person is “alone” at work when they are on their own; when they cannot be seen or heard by another person.

IS WORKING ALONE DANGEROUS, OR, AT LEAST A PROBLEM?

While it is not always hazardous to work alone, it can be when other circumstances are present. Whether a situation is a high or low risk will depend on:

- interaction with the public.
- type of work.
- consequences of an emergency, incident, injury.
- the location.

THE RISKS

Exposure to violence and poor access to emergency assistance are the two main hazards of working alone. However, these hazards can also be faced by people who work with colleagues.

Working alone can increase the likelihood of some workplace hazards or risks occurring and in those cases where incidents do occur, the consequences can be more severe.

JOBS THAT CAN’T BE DONE WORKING ALONE

1. Firefighting operations inside structures that contain atmospheres which are immediately dangerous.
2. Installation, removal or repair of electrical lines over 600 volts
3. Work with de energized electrical lines exposing risk of

contact with parts over 600 volts
4. Handling of radioactive, explosive or highly reactive substances
5. Handling of toxic gases, liquids or solids
6. Handling of flammable liquids
7. Working on highly pressurized systems
8. Welding or cutting near combustible materials
9. Using fall arrest equipment or scaffolding
10. Working in extreme weather

LONE WORKER PROTECTION ADVICE

- Talk to your boss and colleagues about your job, the hazards and how to minimize them.
- Can work be rescheduled so you do not have to work alone?
- Agree on a tracking method to be used if you are overdue.
- Carry a personal alarm, cell phone or two-way radio. Manage the batteries so you will always be able to use them.
- Use a buddy system in higher risk situations.
- File a travel plan and let someone know your route and ETA when you drive somewhere alone.
- Keep vehicles well-maintained to avoid breakdowns.
- Stock an emergency survival kit in the vehicle.
- When visiting a possibly intimidating client, take a taxi and have the driver wait outside.
- If you work alone late at night, get a security escort to your vehicle or bus stop.
- Handling cash or other valuables puts you at risk for violent robbery.
- Have your employer take steps to reduce the amount of cash on hand to lower the incentive for robbers.
- Have your work area arranged for maximum visibility from windows.
- Get training in how to avoid and handle a robbery and learn to use the security system.
- Avoid having a lone worker whenever possible, especially for jobs with a recognized risk.
- Establish a check-in procedure. Make sure that regular

contact is kept with all workers. Establish ways to account for people (visually or verbally) while they are working.

- Schedule higher risk tasks to be done during normal business hours, or when another worker capable of helping in an emergency is present.

FINAL WORD

A lone worker can be anyone who works alone in a fixed facility or away from his or her typical base. At times, the definition applies to those who work alone in factories or warehouses on nights or weekends. It also applies to traveling workers in construction, utilities, maintenance and repair, agriculture, and other fields.