THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY | Risk & Safety Services

Working Alone Program

Risk and Safety Services
RSS 18.24.5
August 2024

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to outline the requirements of Thompson Rivers University's (TRU) Working Alone Program. The intent of this program is to provide the necessary resources and procedures to support the safety of employees working alone or in isolation on campus or at remote worksites. TRU is committed to providing the necessary resources, training, and practices to ensure effective management of our Working Alone Program.

This program is applicable to all employees, including co-op and work study students, and visiting researchers. Imbedded contractors are to have a Working Alone Program for their employees as required if they work alone and are to provide a copy of their program and training records to Risk and Safety Services (RSS).

For those working from home up to 3 days per week, refer to the Hybrid Work Program (HWP) OneTRU site for details on how to implement working alone procedures with applicable Hybrid Work Arrangements (HWA).

Roles and Responsibilities:

The university acting through administrative heads is responsible for:

- Providing a safe, healthy, and secure working environment.
- Ensure adequate resources are available to implement appropriate procedures and controls.
- Provide support to RSS and through RSS, support the Departments, and Supervision in the implementation and management of the Working Alone Program.

Risk and Safety Services Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain the Working Alone Program.
- To provide oversite and support for the program.
- Liaison with the executive team as necessary to ensure resources required to support the program are available.
- Collaborate, conduct, or assist in the audit process.
- Provide and assist with the identification, selection and implementation of various controls as required.
- Provide support as required to department leaders in completing their Working Alone Risk Assessment.
- Ensure appropriate training is provided for all those involved in the Working Alone process.
- Ensure records are kept of all training, education, and tracking documents.
- Follow up on program compliance and work with the TRU community to ensure continual improvement of the program.

Supervisor/ Manager/ Dean/ Faculty/ Researcher (supervising and teaching students) responsibilities:

- Ensure there is a resource available to assist in maintaining their department's Working Alone Program.
- Complete the Working Alone Risk Assessment as required if any worker works alone or in isolation. See RSS 18.24.5A to determine the employee's general risk level and RSS 18.24.5B the Working Alone Risk Assessment Template for how to complete the risk assessment.
- Ensure that their employees complete, review the Program, and follow the procedure when working alone or in isolation.
- Maintain all records (such as training records, audits, corrective actions implemented, action logs etc.) for department and employees as required.
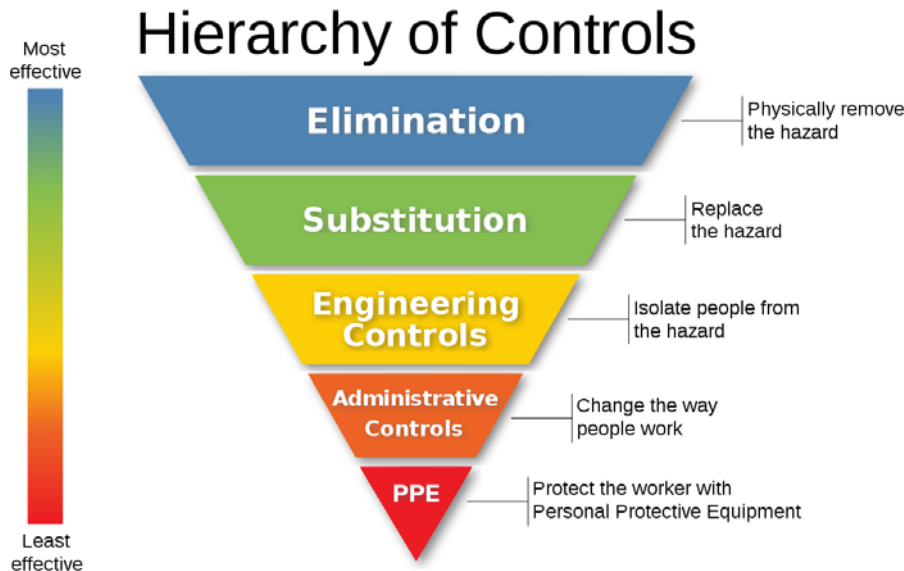
Worker Responsibilities

- Follow the Working Alone Program requirements, when working alone or in isolation.
- Set up their working alone contact through TRUSafe App – as per the program requirements.
- Ensure you have approval to work alone.
- Do not work alone when prohibited to do so.
- Report concerns to Security, RSS, and their Supervisor.

Definitions

1. **Check-In Designate:** the person responsible for checking on a worker working alone or in isolation. In most cases this will be the supervisor or security.
2. **Hazardous activities:** activities, such as: using high speed power tools, using moving/rotating machinery, using radioactive or biohazardous materials, working on/using high voltage equipment, operating heavy-duty equipment, operating mobile equipment (forklifts, ATVs, snowmobiles etc.), using high risk chemicals in large volumes or high concentrations (corrosive, flammable, explosive etc.), working at heights (10 feet +), Confined Space Entry, working on live/energized/pressurized equipment, doing any work that requires energy to be controlled (Lock Out), work on roads, any crane/mechanical lifting work, manual lifting over 50lbs, field research (i.e. remote locations, with animals, with hazardous materials) etc.
3. **Hierarchy of Controls**: a system used to minimize or eliminate exposure to a hazard. Controls need to be addressed starting at the top of the pyramid, working downward. Layering controls is important as you move down the pyramid. Controls are:
   a. Elimination: do not work alone, work during regular hours, have another person with you etc.
   b. Substitution: similar to elimination, do not work during times you would be alone or in isolation.

c. <u>Engineering controls</u>: for working alone, this is typically a "man down alarm" system, GPS monitoring (vehicles), alert software etc.
d. <u>Administrative</u>: safe work procedures, such as this one. Check in schedules, policies, log in sheets etc.
e. <u>Personal Protective Equipment or PPE</u>: safety glasses, gloves, goggles, respirators protective clothing etc. Not applicable for working alone.

Hierarchy of Controls

Most effective

Elimination — Physically remove the hazard

Substitution — Replace the hazard

Engineering Controls — Isolate people from the hazard

Administrative Controls — Change the way people work

PPE — Protect the worker with Personal Protective Equipment

Least effective

4. **Regular working hours:** at TRU, regular working hours are typically 7am to 7pm, Monday through Friday, or as determined by the department's operating schedule.
5. **Working alone or in isolation:** to work by yourself (no one else in the building/floor/campus), in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker in the event of an emergency or if the worker is injured or in ill health. Such as;
    a. Working after hours, as assigned by your supervisor, if this is outside of your normal working hours (early mornings – 2 hours prior to others starting work, evenings, weekends, holidays).
    b. Working alone or separated from others during field research.
6. **TRUSafe:** a web-based system (App) for employees to log their location and estimated time of departure using the Working Alone Module to allow security or your chose Check-In Designate to know where people are located on campus. This will allow security or the chosen contact to check on the well-being of staff working alone. <u>See Appendix A for how to use the Working Alone App.</u>
7. **Worker:** as described in the *Workers Compensation Act*, a person who has entered into or works under a contract of service or apprenticeship, whether the contract is written, oral, express or implied and whether by way of manual labour or otherwise; or otherwise defined in the *Act.* This means, anyone who is employed by TRU (paid directly by TRU).

General Requirements

What does it mean to work alone?

Examples of working alone ON campus are:
- You are required to come into work (as directed by your supervisor), prior to others, or stay late, or work on evenings/weekends. This does not include Faculty who are actively instructing a class OR those who are normally scheduled for extended hours (unless they are supposed to be all alone in a building or far enough from others that they could not be reasonably alerted).
- When you are required to work on the weekends or holidays, if these are not your normal work days.
- Working by yourself (i.e. no one else in the building with you) in a building, even during "work hours," and no one could reasonably provide assistance.

Examples of working alone OFF campus:
- Field research – when not working with others in the immediate area or when you are not within easy communication distance and or you cannot see the other members of your team.
- Travelling outside of city limits for work – by yourself.

What is not considered working alone?

Examples of what is NOT considered working alone:
- When you are working, during regular hours, and there may not be other people in the immediate vicinity. (i.e., when working in a lab, or office space and there is not someone in the room with you, but there are people in other locations within the building/office/department within a reasonable distance or there is frequent access/movement through the area).
- Working in by yourself on a task, but others are in the area, (i.e., completing maintenance work, but others are in the building).
- Choosing to work outside your normal working hours (as specified by WorkSafe BC).

What to do when working alone on campus in Kamloops and Williams Lake:

1. Ensure you have reviewed your Check-In Procedure based of the unit's Risk Assessment. See RSS 18.24.5B Working Alone – Risk Assessment Template and RSS 18.24.5C Check-In Procedure Template.
2. For Kamloops:
   a. Complete the working alone notification process through the TRUSafe App Working Alone Module or email security@tru.ca
      i. Check-in intervals are to be set as determined by the Risk Assessment and outlined in the Check-In Procedure.

NOTE: the check-in intervals are a MINIMUM. As a situation warrants and an employee feels that they require more frequent check-ins, more can be added, however the minimum MUST be met.

  b. Include all required information – TRUSafe working alone module, or;
  c. If emailing, include: your name, building and room number you will be working in and the best contact method to reach you (cell or office number).
  d. If your times change (stay later or leave earlier), you must update security – call, email or through the TRUSafe app, and or update the Working Alone module in the TRUSafe App.

3. <u>For Williams Lake</u>:
  a. Sign in on the sign in sheet, so security knows you are on campus and will check on you during their rounds, and;
  b. Ensure you have emailed your supervisor for permission, indicating when you will be on campus (date and times) and location.
  c. Use the TRUSafe app Working Alone module and set a contact person (can be your supervisor or a personal contact).

4. **Working alone in high risk situations or on high risk tasks is prohibited without special approval and a safety plan, approved by your Supervisor and RSS, is in place. See hazardous activities definition**.
  a. If you are unsure as to whether a task is high risk, please refer to RSS 18.24.5A General Risk Assessment and or contact RSS (safety@tru.ca) before planning on completing it while working alone or in isolation.
   i. Remote field research is not allowed to be conducted by 1 individual (without pre-approved controls in place to ensure the individuals safety), teams may still be considered in isolation, depending on the research. This work can occur; however, controls need to be in place, following the Hierarchy of Controls.
  b. If a high-risk task needs to be completed, controls (following the Hierarchy of Controls) need to be in place to ensure the worker is properly protected, such as not competing the work alone (i.e. having another person present to assist), having shorter interval between scheduled check ins, using communication devices etc.
  c. Please contact RSS for support to develop a working protocol if there is a concern that an employee may be working alone or in isolation completing a high-risk task.

Both the worker and the Check-In Designate (if not security) must follow the written procedure for Check-Ins and both need to go through the check-in procedure to ensure they understand the requirements and expectations.

Working alone requirements

Working Alone	Location	Requirements	Person responsible for checking in with the employee working alone
Being required to work out of expected hours before or after others leave, weekends and holidays	On campus	Use the TRUSafe App to complete the working alone form or email info to security@tru.ca A Risk Assessment must be completed and a Check-In Procedure in place	Security or Supervisor or chosen individual
Travelling outside of city limits	Domestic	Set up a check-in process with your supervisor. Must include the check-in process requirements as outlined in this procedure and a risk assessment.	Supervisor or their designate
Field research	Various off campus locations	• Do not go to a remote field research location by yourself without a plan and a communication/check in procedure and method pre-established. • When working with others, but separated by more than 1km, set up a check in process between groups. • Research Lead is to ensure a check-in process is in place with their supervisor or a designate. • Ensure that there is an effective communication tool available (i.e. a satellite phone, 2-way radios, panic whistle/horn etc.).	Research team and Supervisor or their designate
High Risk tasks	On or off campus	THESE TASKS ARE PROHIBITED WHILE WORKING ALONE without an approved safety plan, risk assessment and check-in procedure	NA

Annual Review

On an annual basis, RSS will complete a formal review of the Working Alone program to ensure it is up to date and working effectively. The JOHSC may be consulted as a part of this review process. This review may also take place at any time if:

- A change in regulatory requirements could affect this program or procedures.
- Aspects of this program or its procedures are reported to be working ineffectively.
- Or an incident occurred that involved aspects of this program.

Revision Control

Date of Revision:	Position of Approver:	Signature:
August 15, 2024	Safety Advisor	*Henry Chan*

Version:	Author:	Date:	Description of Version:
3	Manager, Health, Safety & Environment	August 11, 2022	Updated OSEM 18.24.2 to 18.24.3
4	Safety Tech.	June 9, 2023	Updated OSEM 18.24.3 to 18.24.4 Program for on campus and remote worksites (field research).
5	Safety Advisor	August 15, 2024	RSS update