

BNL Working Alone Guidance

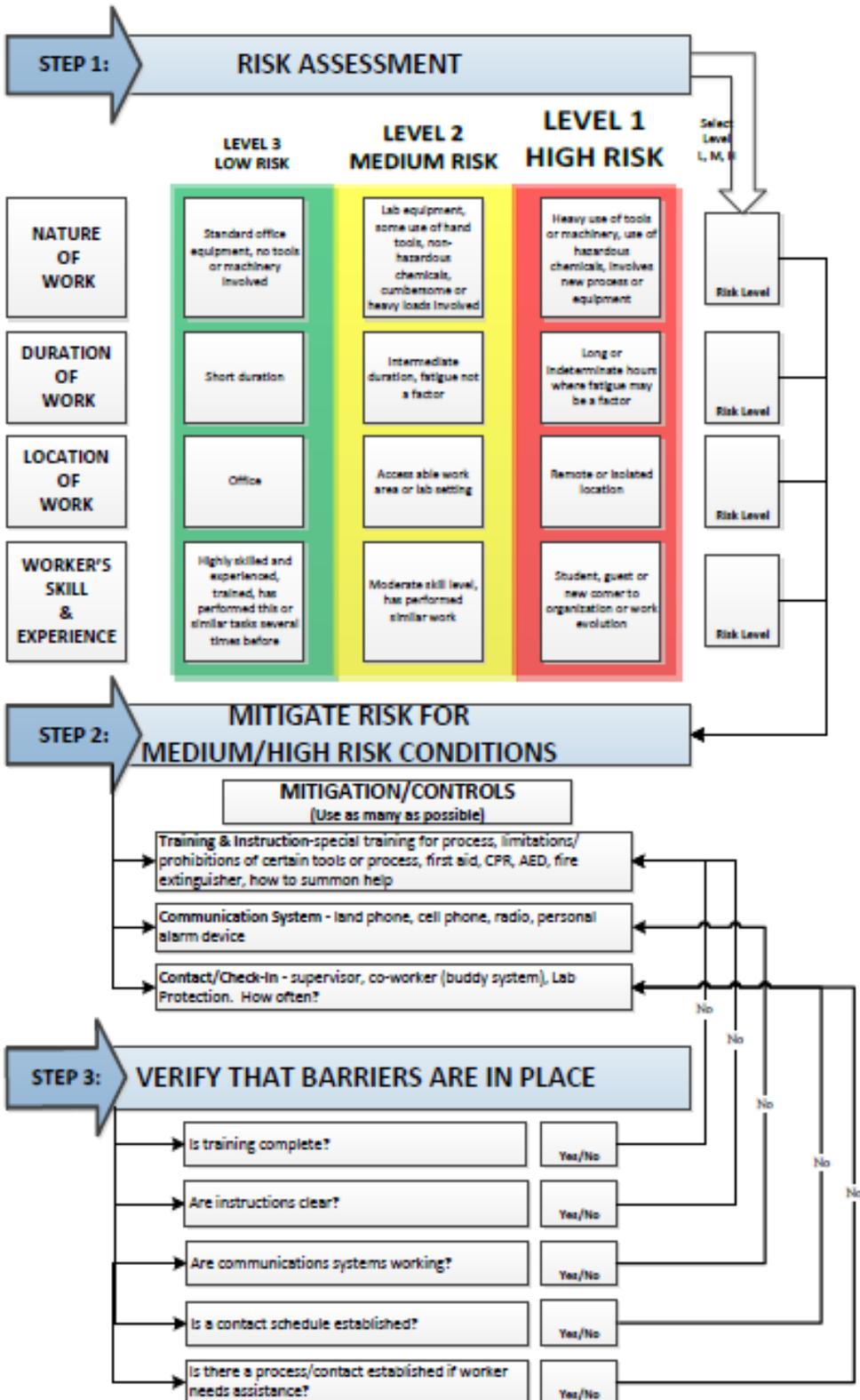
Purpose: To assist supervisors in determining whether activities performed by workers should be performed alone

Working alone has special hazards. If there is a need to work alone, consider what would be done if an emergency/accident occurred. When working alone is deemed necessary, line management is responsible for taking sufficient measures to protect employees and the institution.

This guidance has been assembled to assist supervisors in assessing the risk, establishing and verifying controls associated with the special hazards of working alone when it is deemed necessary. This guidance may assist supervisors in determining that workers should not work alone.

Working alone is defined as work in circumstances/location where assistance would not be readily available to a lone worker in case of emergency, injury, or illness; or, when working with a hazard that could incapacitate the worker so that he/she cannot “self-rescue” or activate emergency alarms. Furthermore, the worker is the only person in the work area and is not directly supervised or observed by another person at any time. This includes *working after hours* and *working in isolation*.

WORK ALONE GUIDANCE



Other Definitions:

<i>after hours</i>	With the exception of round the clock operating organizations (e.g., Fire /Rescue, Collider-Accelerator), a period of time when “normal” weekday or shift operations cease (i.e., between 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. weekdays, Saturday, Sunday, holidays, and any other day the Laboratory is officially closed).
<i>buddy system</i>	System of organizing work so that the worker can always be seen or heard by at least one other worker for the periodic checking of the person’s safety.
<i>workers</i>	Persons performing work at the BNL Upton site, including employees, guests, students, and subcontractors.
<i>working in isolation</i>	A setting where a worker performs work when there is nobody within sight or earshot who can assist the worker in the event of an emergency, injury, or ill health, and when the worker cannot expect a visit from another person.

Process Details/Questions

1) Assessing the Risk:

Consider the following items when assessing the risk of working alone or in isolated area. Each circumstance will be different, so adapt the questions to suit your situation.

- What type of *Work Alone* is involved?
- Work after normal hours?
- Work in an isolated area?
- Can this work be reasonably scheduled for another time or location to eliminate working alone?

What is the background of the worker working alone?

- Worker with many years of experience? Newcomer to organization? Undergraduate student?
- Guest from another location not familiar with BNL emergency services?
- Is it reasonable for the person to be alone at all?

Appropriateness of working alone/in isolation:

- Is it prohibited for the person to be alone while doing the activity? (For example, entry into a confined space without an attendant is prohibited/welding in certain areas without a fire watch).
- What are the consequences resulting from a “worst case” scenario. Is it an acceptable outcome?
- What are possible things that can go wrong? Can they be made acceptable with controls?
- What elevates the risk to the worker? Is there adequate self-rescue?

Location of the work:

- Is the work in a remote or isolated location?
- Is transportation necessary to get there? What kind of transportation is needed?
- Can emergency responders find the worker easily?
- If the person is working inside a locked building, will emergency services be able to get in?

Length of time the person will be working alone:

- What is a reasonable length of time for the person to be alone? How long will the work take?
- What time of the day will the person be alone? Is that a normal time for the worker to be awake?

Communication:

- Is it necessary to "see" the person, or is voice communication/remote camera adequate?
- Will anyone not associated with the work be able to see/hear if an adverse event has occurred? Is it reasonable to expect that by-stander to summon help based on what they will observe from their location?
- Will emergency communication systems work properly in the setting?
- What forms of communication are available for employees to contact emergency assistance?

Type or nature of work:

- Is there adequate training and education for workers to work alone safely?
- Is personal protective equipment adequate and in working order?
- What machinery, tools or equipment will be used? Is any machine more hazardous when operated alone?
- Is there a high risk activity involved?
- Is there risk of an animal attack, insect bite (poisonous or allergic reaction), etc.?

Characteristics of the individual who is working alone:

- Are there any pre-existing medical conditions that may increase the risk?
- Does the person have adequate levels of experience and training?
- Is the individual accustomed to working alone?
- Does the work involve a new process or new equipment?

2) Establishing Controls:

Items to Consider to Address Special Hazards of Work Alone/isolation:

- Observation (closed circuit video systems) and/or communication equipment
- "Person down" systems
- Changes procedures/methods/schedules
- Special training
- Limitations/prohibitions of certain tools
- Limitations/prohibitions on certain processes
- New equipment/ processes required

3) Verify that Controls and Barrier are in Place:

(Are these items present and in working order? Are they accessible and understood by the worker?)

Training and instruction:

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| • First aid | • CPR | • AED | • Fire Extinguisher |
| • Use of a special Tool | • How to summons assistance? | • Use of communication systems? | • How to do special work method? |

Communication systems

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| • Land phone | • Cellular phone | • 2-way radio | • Personal alarm devices |
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Additional Information

Contact (check-in) systems

It may be important that a check-in procedure be in place for operations with significant hazards. Consider if a verbal check-in is adequate, or if the employee could be accounted for by a visual check.

When traveling, a contact person should know the following details:

- Destination;
- Estimated time of arrival;
- Return date & time;
- Contact information while away;
- Mode of travel (public transit, car, plane, etc.); and
- Alternate plans in the event of bad weather, traffic problems, etc.

For on-site work, consider a check-in procedure such as

- Daily plan so it is known where the lone employee will be and when.
- One person named to be the contact at the office, plus a back-up.
- Circumstances that trigger the lone employee to check in and how often.
- Visual check or call-in schedule.
- Contact person call or visit the lone employee periodically to make sure he or she is okay.
- Emergency action plan to be followed if the lone employee does not check-in when he/she is supposed to.

Buddy System

Some work operations have hazards that could suddenly incapacitate a person. Such operations should not be performed without the assistance of another individual who could immediately render assistance or summon help, if necessary (i.e., Buddy System). The “buddy” is to be constantly within sight or sound of other individual and trained to react appropriately to the hazard(s) involved and call Security in the case of an emergency.

Laboratory Protection Check-in Process

During hazardous operations, if the Buddy System is not feasible, an alternative can be achieved by contacting BNL’s Laboratory Protection Division at Building 50 (344-2238) prior to beginning work. Provide the name, telephone number and exact location of the lone worker. An agreed upon time period will be set for communications with the lone worker (e.g., every 30 minutes, four hours, etc.).

The alone worker may then contact Security at the agreed upon time period to let them know his/her status. If Security is not contacted at the agreed upon time interval, a Security Officer could respond to the area to investigate. A supervisor or co-worker can also fill the role of the person to be contacted if a similar process is developed.

Holidays

Access to the buildings during holidays should be only for non-hazardous areas and non-hazardous activities:

- People using buildings during holidays should consider how others will know of their presence in the event of an emergency incident, such as fire or medical emergency.
- People with pre-existing medical conditions that place them at high risk of being alone, can call the Laboratory Protection Division (LPD) at Building 50 (344-2238) and provide their name, building name, and room number. When made aware of those working alone, the LPD will provide periodic check in with those persons.

Emergency Planning

- What process is to be followed if the worker cannot be contacted?
- What process is to be followed if the worker needs assistance?