

Lone Working and Out of Hours Working

Health and Safety Policy and Guidance

(Ref: QM_HS_025)

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1.0 Executive Summary

This Health and Safety Policy establishes the framework for the risk assessment, the risk controls and the health & safety measures to be adopted and implemented for lone working and out of hours working by Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) staff and students; and also for others who may be affected by QMUL activities. The objective of the Policy is to eliminate or where not reasonably practicable, reduce the arising risks to a negligible level.

The Policy defines lone working and out of hours working in the context of QMUL's activities; identifies the roles and responsibilities for Heads of Schools / Institutes / Directorates (S/I/Ds), and for staff, students and others who may be affected. The Policy also notes the key legal and compliance requirements (including certain prohibitions) specified in health and safety legislation and guidance.

Guidance on practical measures (including accidents and emergencies, training, supervision and competencies) for QMUL and resources for the risk assessment of lone working and out of hours working are provided or linked. The Policy has been issued following consultation with Heads of S/I/Ds, the QMUL Health & Safety Advisory Group and staff/student representatives.

2.0 Scope and Application of the Policy

This Policy applies to all QMUL staff, students and others (e.g. contractors, visitors) who may be affected by QMUL activities when on QMUL Premises.

For Health and Safety Policy and Guidance on the control / reduction of risks when working alone / out of hours on QMUL business **but not on QMUL Premises**, see as appropriate, the QMUL Health and Safety Policies for Off-site / Fieldwork or Working Overseas on the Health and Safety Directorate (HSD) [website](#).

3.0 Definitions

Lone Worker:

For the purpose of this Policy, persons who have neither visual nor audible communication with someone (physically) that can summon assistance in the event of an accident, illness or other adverse event is considered to be a 'lone worker'.

Normal Working Hours and 'Out of Hours' Worker:

QMUL views 8 am to 6 pm on normal working weekdays as 'normal working hours', where the full complement of health and safety related assistance (e.g. first aid, fire marshals, security, health and safety advice) is able to be provided to staff, students and others. Outside of these hours, the capacity of QMUL to provide health and safety assistance will be markedly reduced. Persons working outside the 'normal working hours' on QMUL premises will be considered to be working 'out of hours'.

If S/I/Ds wish to extend the 'normal working hours' beyond the above noted times, they must ensure sufficient health and safety related assistance is procured and provided. The needs must be determined by a robust risk assessment. Consideration should be given to the reduced security, first aid and fire marshal provision.

4.0 Relevant Legislation

General duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act etc 1974 (Section 2) and specific duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Regulation 3) require a formal assessment of any significant risks involved when a person is required, or wants to work alone (this maybe within normal working hours or out of hours).

Certain work activities identified in Health and Safety Guidance accompanying the above legislation are prohibited from being carried out by a person working alone. These are contextualised below in this Policy in terms of typical QMUL activities.

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 The Head of S/I/D is responsible for:

- Ensuring there is sufficient planning, implementation, monitoring and review of procedures and arrangements to eliminate, control or reduce risks associated with lone / out of hours working.
- Ensuring the local lone / out of hours arrangements are clearly and explicitly communicated to staff, students and others who may be affected e.g. visitors, contractors.

**Accountability cannot be delegated, although tasks associated with a particular responsibility can be delegated to a competent person.*

5.2 The Lone / Out of Hours Worker (staff / student or other) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that they have obtained prior permission for lone / out of hours working from their line manager / supervisor or host, and if significant risks are involved, their Head of S/I/Ds.
- Informing their line manager / supervisor and Head if they have a health condition or disability that may increase risk from lone / out of hours working.
- Following any control measures identified as part of the risk assessment.
- Ensuring that they are familiar with the local arrangements for fire, first aid, spillages, power failures and other foreseeable emergencies.
- Adhering to agreed protocols for emergency contact, such as:
 - Providing a contact number to their line manager / supervisor.
 - Informing their line manager / supervisor, or lone working 'buddy' the time that they expect to leave the premises.
- Filling out the building entry log book or electronic system on starting work outside normal hours and upon leaving the building, where such a log book or electronic system is present in the building.
- Informing their line manager immediately if there are any problems or changes to agreed arrangements.
- Keeping within the scope of the agreed work and work areas.
- Ensuring accidents / incidents are reported on [MySafety](#).

**If an individual instructs or issues tasks to another individual or group of individuals, then whether a designated line manager or not, they become responsible for the health, safety and well-being of those they have instructed.*

5.3 The Director of Estates and Facilities is responsible for:

- Providing up-to-date information on local security arrangements to Heads or Directors of S/I/Ds.
- Working with Heads / Directors and Managers of S/I/Ds and to control access to buildings / areas under their control or remit, both during and outside normal working hours.
- Assisting the Heads or Directors of S/I/Ds in assessing the access control requirements and implementing suitable control measures for out of hours working.
- Granting staff and students access to buildings and areas as authorised by the relevant Head or Director of S/I/Ds.
- Granting contractors / visitors access to agreed places and for agreed periods as authorised on the relevant QMUL authorisation (permit-to-work, safe to work or time dependant method statement / risk assessment) except when a building or segregated parts of a building have been fully handed over to a contractor (e.g. during refurbishment).
- Informing Heads or Directors of S/I/Ds of instances of non-compliance recorded by Security Officers or other Estates & Facilities Officers on the next working day or at the earliest opportunity.

6.0 Monitoring

The compliance by QMUL S/I/Ds with this Policy is monitored by the regime of health and safety audit and inspections and by reports to the Faculty and S/I/Ds Health and Safety Groups. Summary reports to the QMUL H&S Advisory Group and Queen Mary Senior Executive (QMSE) to evaluate ongoing QMUL compliance and efficiency of control measures are produced by HSD.

7.0 Guidance on risk assessing lone / out of hours working

All activities that pose a significant risk should be assessed with the aim of eliminating and reducing risks to a negligible level. There are additional considerations however when risk assessing activities undertaken by lone / out of hours workers.

7.1 Task / Activity

7.1.1 Prohibited activities when working alone / out of hours

a. Work in confined spaces

- Work in confined spaces is strictly prohibited where there may be inadequate ventilation, risk of toxic gas release or where oxygen may be depleted to a dangerous level. Examples include tanks, manholes, pipes, flues, ducts, ceiling voids, enclosed basement rooms, store rooms, dark rooms, cold rooms, and cryogenic liquid storage rooms.

b. Use of unsecured ladders

- Ladders which cannot be secured must always be footed by a second person when in use.

c. Erecting or dismantling scaffolding

d. Use of dangerous machinery without adequate training / competence

- Dangerous machinery includes woodworking machines, dough mixers, meat mincing machines, metal milling machines, guillotine machines, slicing equipment machines used in laboratories (e.g. microtome) or catering (both powered and manual), hydraulic and pneumatic power presses, potato chipping machines, food mixing machines when used with attachments for mincing, slicing, chipping or any other cutting operations or for crumbing, high speed centrifuges, high speed homogenisers and liquidisers.
- Persons are prohibited from working alone at the machines listed above, *unless* they have received sufficient training to use the machines and they are deemed competent to operate them.
- Sufficient training, in the context of these machines, must include an appropriate period of instruction on the hazards associated with them, and the measures required to minimise the risks. The correct use of guards, safety devices and protective clothing where appropriate must be demonstrated. Operators must be shown how to access and use emergency stops on the machines. The operator should then be supervised using the machine to assess competency.
- A written record of the training and competency for the task must be kept.

e. Work on live electrical conductors

- Persons carrying out work on or near live electrical conductors must be accompanied by another person. The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 give the following examples of electrical work where it is recommended this arrangement should be followed
- Electrical work involving manipulation of live, un-insulated power conductors at above 240 volts using insulated tools

- Other work on or near bare live conductors where a person working alone would not be capable of undertaking the work safely without assistance in, for example, keeping other persons from the work area.

f. Work involving unpredictable behaviour from clients / customers / subjects

- This work should be avoided in situations where immediate assistance may be needed e.g. social science / psychiatric interviews with highly unpredictable / violent / aggressive persons.

g. Diving operations e.g. underwater research activities.

h. Fumigation work e.g. non-remote fumigation of a Containment Level 3 laboratory with formaldehyde or accessing plant area where fumigant may be released.

i. Work by young persons

- Persons under 18 years of age must not work alone on QMUL premises.

7.1.2 Handling of plant and equipment

Where plant / equipment is heavy, awkward, unstable or large, more than one person may be necessary to operate essential controls to allow the safe running of equipment.

7.1.3 Handling of substances and materials

The handling of hazardous substances and materials must be considered carefully, particularly where they are subject to any of the following:

- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations
- Dangerous Substances and Explosives Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)
- Ionising Radiation Regulations

Substances that have, for example, the potential to cause severe acute injury, either alone or as a component of a reaction, to cause burns, or to affect the respiratory, cardiovascular, or central nervous system must be assessed and measures taken to eliminate or reduce the risk to negligible levels.

Examples

- It is recommended that the handling of pathogenic / hazardous biological / clinical samples within a cryogenic liquid store is conducted as a two-person operation, and out of hours working avoided (see 7.1.1 (a) for specific restrictions for 'confined spaces')
- Working with Hazard Group 3 pathogens– recommendation is that *unless* the task necessitates work at a particular time (e.g. processing of samples received on Saturday morning) and the worker is trained, competent and robust emergency procedures are in place, lone working and out of hours working should be avoided.
- Experiments with highly toxic, explosive and extremely flammable substances - recommendation is that *unless* the task necessitates work at a particular time (e.g. time course dependant experiment) and the worker is trained, competent and robust emergency procedures are in place, lone working and out of hours working should be avoided.

In many cases, the effective assessment for health and safety would be to conduct the work during normal working hours, with adequate supervision by the responsible person and with all applicable health and safety assistance available. Particular consideration in the assessment must be made for those who are new to the work (new staff / postgraduates or those conducting cross-disciplinary work) or are trainees.

7.1.4 Handling of cash / valuables

Consideration should be given to whether there will be a significant risk of violence / aggression against the lone worker handling valuables e.g. cash, filming equipment, monitoring equipment.

7.2 Location / Organisation

7.2.1 Access and egress

In the evenings and weekends, some doors which are normally open during normal working hours may be locked for security reasons. Lone / out of hours workers must therefore be made aware of exit routes and procedures for leaving the building. Avoid holding doors open for people unless you know them or have checked their ID.

Always be aware of your own personal safety, including when travelling to and from your place of work. It is recommended the following examples of good practice are considered:

Inform someone that you are on your way in / out of work

Stay alert and aware of your surroundings. Avoid chatting on your mobile phone or listening to music on your headphones, as this can distract you from your surroundings or any potential danger signs.

Consider how you are getting home before leaving work. Pre book a local licenced cab so you know it will be coming at the end of the night. Only hail a taxi if it has the illuminated taxi sign. Sit in the back and avoid giving away personal details.

When travelling by public transport, wait in a well-lit, busy area. Don't be afraid of moving should someone's behaviour cause you concern.

Think about getting a personal safety alarm. Keep it in an easily accessible place and carry it in your hand if you feel at risk.

If you are out at night, try to stick to busy streets and near other people. Avoid danger spots such as poorly-lit areas, deserted parks, or quiet alleyways and walk facing oncoming traffic to avoid kerb crawlers.

7.2.2 Accidents, emergencies and ill-health

Lone / out of hours workers should be physically and mentally capable of responding correctly in emergency situations.

Local Emergency Procedures must be established by the S/I/Ds and lone / out of hours workers given clear and concise emergency instructions and training. Similar information should be given to visitors, contractors or service engineers who may be working alone.

Reporting Methods

All QMUL staff, students, visitors and contractors working alone / out of hours must know how to report an accident, incident or significant near miss according to the QMUL Policy:

<http://www.hsd.qmul.ac.uk/accident-reporting/>

Suitable systems should be devised to monitor the conditions of lone / out of hours workers and should include periodic checks (e.g. during and/or at the end of the lone working / out of hours working period).

In addition, it may be necessary to consider:

- Procedures where a member of supervisory staff periodically visits and visually monitors lone / out of hours workers.
- Procedures where regular contact between the lone / out of hours worker and a member of supervisory staff or QMUL Security is maintained (by responsive messages – e.g. email, telephone, texts or twitter messages or by responsive visual contact media (e.g. skype, FaceTime) or by Security patrol checks (physical or audible/visual responsive methods).
- Automatic warning devices which raise the alarm in an emergency and are activated by the absence of activity or deviation from normal activity from the lone / out of hours worker (e.g. high risk area alarms, personal alarms, with connection to a suitable monitoring system / person)
- Suitable "signing in & out" reporting systems for Campus / Buildings. It is recommended to consider reporting systems that link into QMUL Security to obtain 'first responder' assistance.

It is important to note that where there is a requirement for a lone worker to check in with a buddy / colleague at an agreed frequency, response procedures must be established and both the lone worker and the buddy need to be fully aware of what action(s) will be taken in this event. The buddy must ensure this procedure is followed if no contact is made by the lone worker. It is also imperative to periodically test any identified response procedures to ensure that they work and remain effective. It is recommended any tests are recorded.

Liaison and establishment of effective lone / out of hours working procedures with contractors / service engineers is the responsibility of the Estates & Facilities Directorate (when they are contracted by Estates & Facilities) or the contracting S/I/Ds.

QMUL staff in embedded space (e.g. in Barts Health Trust Premises) must follow the emergency procedures identified by the host organisation.

7.3 Individual – Lone / Out of Hours Worker

7.3.1 Fit to lone work

Consider whether there are any reasons the individual might be more vulnerable than others and be particularly at risk if they work alone e.g. pregnant, disabled.

Both routine work and foreseeable emergencies should be considered when assessing whether a person is medically fit to work alone. Emergencies may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual. A personal emergency evacuation plan should give consideration to this.

7.3.2 Assessing competency: information, instruction, training and supervision

The competency of the individual undertaking the task is particularly important where there is limited supervision. An assessment of their competence should be made based on their training, knowledge and experience of the task. The individual must be fully aware of the risks involved in the work and the necessary precautions, especially where it may be critical to avoid panic response in unusual situations.

S/I/Ds should therefore establish clear procedures in line with this Policy, to set limits as to what can and cannot be done, and conduct an assessment of competency for higher risk tasks. These procedures should identify when lone / out of hours workers should stop or not conduct the work and when they must seek advice, assistance or permissions. HSD can provide training, awareness and advice on this topic, and S/I/Ds should contact HSD to facilitate this.

Although lone / out of hours workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, QMUL has a duty to provide appropriate control of the work. The extent of supervision required will depend upon the risks involved and the competency and experience of the person carrying out the work.

Persons new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job that presents high level of risks, or dealing with new situations must not work alone / out of hours until their supervision needs are assessed. The extent of supervision required is a line management decision and it should not be left to individuals to decide when they require assistance.

If the lone worker's first language is not English, consideration should be given to whether there are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communication, especially in emergencies.

8.0 Risk Assessment and Other Resources

Risk Assessment template: http://www.hsd.qmul.ac.uk/media/hsd/documents/QMUL_HS_018_Aug-2019_Lone-Out-of-Hours-Working-Risk-Assessment-Form.docx

Further risk assessment templates to suit particular work scenarios can be designed by HSD upon request.

Some S/I/Ds may have their own risk assessment template specifically based for their activities – consult your local Safety Coordinator. Contact details can be found here:

<http://www.hsd.qmul.ac.uk/a-z/safety-coordinators/>

HSE Guidance on Working Alone: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>

HSE micro website on Lone Working: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm>

Suzy Lamplugh Trust: <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/> - includes a directory of lone worker devices and apps.

Document Control

Version 3

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Date of Issue: Version 3 issued July 2019

Date of next Scheduled Review: July 2022

Revision(s) Version No.	Date of alteration and re-issue	Details of changes	Changes made by
01	01/01/2005 (default document date)	Initial Version	Changes - N/A Author : Dr John Robinson (Director, Health and Safety Department)
01a	Sep 2008	Re-formatting to new document format	Darren Ford (H&S Administrator)
02	02 Sep 2014	Substantial - Normal working hours details, out of hours term inclusion, roles and responsibilities, other amendments , generic risk assessment form linked, additional guidance documents noted.	Mark Ariyanayagam. (H&S Manager) Draft Consultation (D/I/S Managers / HSAG/ Safety Coordinators) : 26 March 2014 – 9 April 2014

		Ref ID changed to QM_OHSD_GA025	<p>Checked & Approved - Marion Richards (Director OHSD) 3rd June 2014</p> <p>HoD/S/I consultation July-Aug 2014</p> <p>Final Sign off – Marion Richards 26 Sep 2014</p>
3	February 2016	Filepath changed from QMUL_OHSD_GA025	Darren Mulkerrins-Ford
4	July 2019	<p>Document updated and reviewed:</p> <p>Condensed responsibilities section</p> <p>Reformatted</p> <p>New info on personal safety</p>	Megan Vagg