

## Safe Science = Good Science

December 14, 2021

University Business Hours:  
M-F 8am – 4:30pm

### “Working Alone” Definition

Individuals are alone at work when on their own; they cannot be seen or heard by another worker; and/or where assistance is not readily available when needed.



### Risk of Working Alone Depends On:

- Location
- Type of Work
- Interactions
- Duration of work
- Potential consequences of an emergency, incident, or injury.

For questions or concerns please call DEHS at 852-6670 or email [dehsubm@louisville.edu](mailto:dehsubm@louisville.edu)

# Working Alone

Research is not constrained to a typical business schedule. Working alone in the lab can occur multiple times throughout the year due to your specific research and schedule. You must take extra precaution when working before or after normal business hours, on weekends, or during holiday breaks when less people are on campus. If you will be working during the upcoming holiday break, please review the following safety guidelines and best practices for working alone.

An ideal practice is to never work alone. **Working outside of normal business hours, weekends, or through a holiday break period prior approval is required by your Principal Investigator when working alone in the laboratory.** It is recommended to work in pairs or plan with other lab members on the same floor to check on each other periodically while working. If your building has security guards, please notify them that you present and ask them to check on you during rounds.

### Safety Tips

- **Plan Ahead** – Schedule high risk tasks or work involving hazardous materials during normal working hours when others are present. Always notify your supervisor when planning to work outside normal hours or on weekends.
- **Conduct Communication Checks** – Establish a communication schedule or “buddy system”. Contact should be made at prearranged intervals, via in-person, phone, or email.
- **Be Aware of Your Surroundings** – Know the location to the nearest safety equipment, shower, eyewash station, fire extinguisher, etc. Proceed with caution when alone and notify your supervisor immediately of near-misses or any unsafe working conditions.
- **Up-to-Date Training** – Anyone working alone should be up to date on safety training and have experience with the procedures being conducted.
- **Emergency Contact** – In the event of an emergency contact ULPD at 852-6111 or 911. Know your building address and room number. If you feel unsafe walking to your vehicle, you can contact ULPD to request a Campus Safety Escort.

### Do Not Work Alone When:

- Working with hazardous chemicals or substances that in the event of an accident, the user would require immediate assistance from another person. *Ex: A lone worker splashes a chemical in their eyes and unable to help themselves get to the eyewash station.*
- Working in confined spaces.
- Working around exposed live electricity conductors, with or around machinery shop equipment. Be cautious of any item that may become entangled such as jewelry, loose clothing, and long hair.
- **Never work alone with acutely toxic chemicals.**