

WORKING ALONE POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Simmons University (Simmons) is committed to minimizing and reducing risks associated with the workplace and educational environment. Working alone, especially after hours, can be unsafe and should be avoided whenever possible.

To avoid this risk, this policy ensures faculty, adjuncts, staff, and students working alone have some effective way of communicating with individuals who can respond immediately if there is an emergency or if a person is injured or ill. This Policy also provides faculty, adjuncts, staff, and students with practical advice that describes general “best practices”. These are recognized and followed by other institutions with effective programs in place to make their workplace safe.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide for measures to protect the health and safety of, and minimize risk to, any Simmons faculty, adjuncts, staff, and students, working alone, in circumstances where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of an injury, ill health or emergency. Strict adherence to this policy will help to meet health and safety legal requirements and demonstrate due diligence in work alone situations.

This policy applies to all work with hazardous materials (chemical, biological or radiological material), hazardous processes, and/or hazardous equipment in laboratories at Simmons.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty, adjuncts, chairs, and deans have the responsibility to ensure the safety of all lab workers in their laboratory. In addition, they review the Laboratory Working Alone Approval Forms and approve laboratory staff to work alone.

The Director of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) is available to help faculty, adjuncts, chairs, and deans with the implementation of this policy.

The Laboratory Technician Committee and Executive Safety Committee will review this policy prior to implementation and periodically, as needed.

4.0 POLICY

The policy depends on the following factors associated with performing the work:

- Person performing work
- Hazardous materials
- Hazardous processes
- Hazardous equipment

Table 1 summarizes this policy. Anyone at Simmons requesting to work alone in a laboratory must complete a Laboratory Working Alone Approval Form, which is provided in Appendix A.

Table 1 – Summary for Person Performing Work				
Description	High School	Undergraduate	Graduate	Laboratory Technician, Faculty, Adjunct, Staff
No Hazardous Materials, Equipment, and/or Processes	Always Supervised when in Laboratory	No restrictions		
Hazardous Materials, Equipment, and/or Processes		Someone else in laboratory	Allowed if a Laboratory Specific Working Alone Protocol Approval form was completed and approved by faculty, adjunct, chair, or dean	
The reason why a person is not permitted to work alone	No experience Legal restrictions	Limited experience in laboratories or emergency situations	Experienced in laboratory procedures and emergency response procedures	

The policy is that the following chemicals will not be used while working alone:

- Pyrophoric Chemicals
- Water Reactive Chemicals
- Potentially Explosive Chemicals or Compounds
- Explosive Salts
- Acutely Toxic Chemicals or Gases
- Peroxide Forming Chemicals
- Select Agents
- Strong Corrosives
- Strong Oxidizing Agents
- Strong Reducing Agents
- Regulated Carcinogens

- Flammable Gases
- Other chemicals or substances deemed hazardous by Faculty, Laboratory Technician, or EH&S

The following procedures will not be conducted with only one person present:

- Use of machine shop equipment or lathes
- Procedures involving high-pressure equipment
- Procedures involving high temperatures > 115 degrees Fahrenheit
- Transferring large quantities [e.g., 10 liters or more] of hazardous materials
- High voltage or high current

The following processes do not require approve for working alone:

- Cleaning and non-hazardous maintenance activities in laboratories
- Working in storage areas
- Working in offices, libraries and at computer workstations

5.0 DEFINITIONS

Hazard: Any facility, location, equipment, tool, job, task, or action that presents a potential of serious injury or death to a person.

Hazardous Materials: Hazardous materials includes, but is not limited to, chemicals that are pyrophoric, water reactive, potentially explosive, acutely toxic, peroxide forming, strong corrosives, strong oxidizing agents, strong reducing agents and regulated carcinogens; biological material that is listed as a “select agent”; and radiological material.

Hazardous Equipment: Hazardous equipment includes, but is not limited to, equipment found in machine shops (lathes, drill presses) and high pressure/vacuum equipment.

Hazardous Process: Hazardous process is a process that processes a hazardous chemical above its permissible exposure limit or occupational exposure limit, uses hazardous equipment, or exposes a hazard to a person.

Serious Injuries: Serious Injuries are those that result in time loss (beyond the three day grace period) and/or hospitalization.

Working Alone: A worker is considered as "working alone" if the individual is working by his/herself such that assistance is not readily available should some injury, illness or emergency arise. Alone is interpreted as being out of visual contact with another person for more than a few minutes. It includes

working in physical isolation, e.g. as the sole occupant of a laboratory or during a site sampling activity, where no other person is in the vicinity, i.e. within a short direct range or earshot. It is possible for a worker to be on the same floor of a building or even in the same general area as others, yet be working alone. It can occur during normal working hours as well as in the evening, at night or during weekends.

6.0 PROCEDURE

Working alone, especially after hours, should be avoided whenever possible. Below is the procedure for working alone.

1. Conduct a Hazard Assessment of the work being performed and the risks and emergency requirements for working alone or after hours.
2. Prepare a written safety protocol identifying the hazards, risks and the methods for controlling the risks.
3. Complete a Laboratory Working Alone Approval Form (Appendix A) for review by faculty, adjunct, chair, or dean and possible, approval. **Please submit this form at least one week prior to conducting the work.** The faculty, adjunct, chair or dean approval for working alone or after normal building hours must consider:
 - Tasks and hazards involved in the work.
 - Consequences resulting from a worst-case scenario.
 - The possibility of an accident or incident that would prevent the laboratory personnel from calling for help.
 - The laboratory personnel's training and experience.
 - Time the work is to be conducted (during normal business hours versus at night or on weekends/holidays).
4. Have a cell phone on person. If no cell phone is available or there is no cell service, know where the campus phone is located and have the emergency number posted nearby.
5. Ensure Emergency Response information is available and posted in the laboratory.

7.0 EMERGENCY RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Emergency requirements including, but not limited to:

- The person's ability to self-rescue
- "Check in" with someone (identify person and confirm they are available before beginning work)
- Door has a viewing window or other means of indicating someone is inside
- Notify Public Safety about working alone
 - Provide them with a cell phone number

- A recorded message for those individuals working alone in laboratories should include the following:
 - Name
 - Building name/number, floor number, room/lab number
 - Any highly hazardous processes/chemicals being used
- Safety equipment is accessible (< 55 feet)
 - Class ABC Fire Extinguisher
 - Eyewash station
 - Drench Shower

APPENDIX A – LABORATORY WORKING ALONE APPROVAL FORM

Person Requesting to Work Alone (Please Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date of Request: _____ Proposed Start Date of Work: _____

Laboratory Location: Building: _____ Room: _____

Brief Description of Procedure: _____

CHOOSE THE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- This procedure does not involve any highly hazardous materials, equipment, and/or processes. “Working Alone” is allowed. Please sign and date the form below.
- This procedure involves work with highly hazardous materials, equipment, and/or processes. Identify which of the following apply:

<p>Chemical Hazards – Working with any of the following chemicals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Pyrophoric Chemicals (Metal carbonyls: Lithium carbonyl, Nickel tetracarbonyl; Metal hydrides: Potassium Hydride, Sodium hydride, Lithium Aluminum Hydride; Nonmetal hydrides: Arsine, Boranes, Diethylarsine, diethylphosphine, Germane, Phosphine, phenylphosphine, Silane; Elements: Phosphorus, Cesium, Lithium, Potassium, Sodium, Sodium Potassium Alloy (NaK)), or listed as OSHA Hazard Class Pyrophoric<input type="checkbox"/> Water Reactive Chemicals (ex.: Aluminum Carbide, Calcium, Calcium carbide, Lithium aluminum hydride, Potassium, Sodium), or listed as OSHA Hazard Class “substances which, in contact with water, emit flammable gases”<input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Explosive Chemicals (ex.: Azide Metal (M-N₃), Nitrate (-ONO₂), Nitro (-NO₂), Nitrite (-ONO), Peroxide (-O-O-), Ammonium nitrate, Ammonium perchlorate, Benzoyl peroxide, Dinitrophenol, Nitrocellulose, Picric acid (trinitrophenol), Urea nitrate), or listed as OSHA Hazard Class Explosive or Self-reactive<input type="checkbox"/> Explosive Salts (ex.: Perchlorate salts (ClO₄-)), or listed as OSHA Hazard Class Explosive or Self-reactive<input type="checkbox"/> Acutely Toxic Chemicals (ex.: Carbon Monoxide, Cyanide salts, Digoxin, 2,4-Dinitrophenol, Methyl mercaptan, Nitric oxide, Phosgene, Potassium cyanide, Sodium Azide, Sodium cyanide, any chemical with LD₅₀ (oral) < 50 mg/kg) or listed as OSHA Hazard Class Acutely Toxic Category 1 or 2<input type="checkbox"/> Peroxide Forming Chemicals (ex.: Isopropyl Ether, Methyl Isobutyl Ketone, Tetrahydrofuran, Acrylonitrile, Methyl Methacrylate, Styrene), or listed as OSHA Hazard Class Peroxide<input type="checkbox"/> Strong Corrosives (ex., Hydrochloric acid, Hydrofluoric acid, Nitric acid, Perchloric acid, Phenol, Sulfuric acid, Potassium hydroxide, Sodium hydroxide), or listed as OSHA Hazard Class Corrosive<input type="checkbox"/> Strong Oxidizing Agent (ex.: Ammonium perchlorate, Ammonium permanganate, Bromine, Calcium
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chlorate, Calcium hypochlorite, Chromic acid, Hydrogen peroxide, Oxygen), or listed as OSHA Hazard Class Oxidizer

- Strong Reducing Agents (ex.: Lithium, Lithium aluminum hydride, Magnesium, Potassium, Sodium, Sodium borohydride)
- Regulated Carcinogens (ex.: Acrylonitrile, Benzene, Formaldehyde, Gallium Arsenide, Inorganic Arsenic, Paraformaldehyde), or listed as OSHA Hazard Class Carcinogen
- Flammable Gas (ex., hydrogen)
- Other – Please specify: _____

Biological Hazards – Working with any of the following biological materials.

- Select Agents (ex. Botulinum neurotoxin, Tetrodotoxin, Yersinia pestis)
- Biological materials requiring Biosafety Level 2 Practices and Procedures
- Other – Please specify: _____

Radiological Hazards – Working with any of the following radioactive materials.

- Isotopes - Please specify isotope: _____
- Extremely Low Frequency Radiation
- Microwave Radiation
- Infrared Radiation
- Visible Light Radiation
- Ultraviolet Radiation
- Lasers
- Other – Please specify: _____

Process Hazards – Check all that apply to work.

- Use of machine shop or lathes – Please specify equipment: _____
- Procedures using high pressures or pressurized equipment – Please specify equipment: _____
- Procedures using high temperatures > 115oF – Please specify equipment: _____
- Transferring high volumes (> 10 liters) of hazardous materials
- High voltage or high current
- Other – Please specify: _____

EH&S Requirements – Check to confirm that the following EH&S Requirements will be met when working alone.

- Able to rescue her/himself in case of an emergency
- Identify second person or buddy for work
- Post Laboratory Emergency Procedures in laboratory
- Notify Public Safety about working alone.

- Safety Equipment is accessible (< 55 feet).

FACULTY, CHAIR OR DEAN APPROVAL

I have reviewed the information associated with this procedure, the tasks and hazards involved in the work, the consequences resulting from a worse- case scenario, the possibility of an accident or incident that would prevent the laboratory personnel from calling for help, the laboratory personnel’s training and experience and the time the work is to be conducted (during normal business hours versus at night or on weekends/holidays). This lab worker has permission to work alone on this procedure.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____