

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

	400 – PERSONNEL & EMPLOYEE	CODE:	AP 494
SECTION:	RELATIONS		
PROCEDURE:	WORKING ALONE		

BACKGROUND

The school division recognizes that when employees are involved in working alone activities, there are increased safety risks and precautions that must be in place for the protection of all employees. The aim of the procedure is to increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to working alone and to ensure that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to eliminate risks or to reduce those risks to the lowest practicable level.

These risks and precautions must be communicated appropriately to employees to ensure that employees are responsible for following safe work practices.

Definition

Working Alone: Saskatchewan's Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996, Section 35, defines working alone as working *"at a worksite as the only worker of the employer or contractor at that worksite, in circumstances where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of injury, ill health or emergency."*

Alone at Work: A person is alone at work when they are on their own; when they cannot be seen or heard by another person; and when they cannot expect a visit from another worker. In some jurisdictions, the definition of "employee" covers independent contractors as well as paid employees.

Regular Working Hours: For the purpose of this policy, regular working hours for the division are defined as 7:30 am to 6:00 pm during the facility's scheduled operating days. During regular hours it has been determined that each facility has many people on site that are capable and expected to provide helpful assistance in a timely manner. However, there still may be instances during regular hours where staff and supervisors must take precautions as they may be working in isolated portion of facilities such as roofs or mechanical rooms.

1. Division Responsibilities

- 1.1. The Division will identify risks associated with those working alone and take the following into consideration and communicate these with the employee:
 - 1.1.1. Safety Training (work safe practices including identifying tasks that require assistance, employees working alone are confident in their safety, etc.)
 - 1.1.2. Appropriate safety equipment (required for the job)

1.1.3. Communication (cell phone, methods of regular contact, estimated times of arrival, etc.)

1.1.4. Medical Emergencies (location of first aid kits, phone numbers, etc.)

1.1.5. Fire (location of fire extinguishers, exits, etc.)

1.2. Duties of Immediate Supervisors

1.2.1. Provide information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker.

1.2.2. Establish an effective means of communication between the worker and persons capable of responding to the worker's need.

1.2.3. Review the Working Alone administrative procedure, annually, or as necessary through the Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

2. Employee Responsibilities

2.1. Workers must work in compliance with the Saskatchewan's Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, 1996.

2.2. The employee will inform their immediate supervisor of any concerns or incidents regarding working alone.

2.3. All workers are reminded to use personal protective equipment and clothing as required and to report workplace hazards and incidents to their immediate supervisor.

2.4. The employee will take personal responsibility for sharing information regarding their whereabouts.

2.5. All staff working alone in a division facility outside the regular hours of the job/position should ensure that their immediate supervisor is aware that the work is being done and arrangements for communication are in place.

2.6. Workers with medical conditions or severe allergies that may require an emergency response should inform their immediate supervisor in order to establish a specific response plan when working alone.

2.7. No work that puts the worker at high risk for injury is to be conducted when working alone (e.g., working on a ladder, in a confined space, at heights over 2 meters, and/or manual handling heavy loads).

2.8. Staff handling money, should not keep large sums of money in isolated areas. Cheques and cash should be secured at all times in a safe or under lock and key. Bank deposits are to be made frequently as per AP 512. If threatened with violence, the employee should immediately turn over the money.

- 2.9. Meetings should be scheduled during times when the building is most populated. Staff who do not feel safe meeting alone with members of the public (i.e. parents of students) can arrange for the attendance of an appropriate staff member (i.e. administrator) at the meeting.
- 2.10. Work in isolated areas, where it is not a normal requirement of the job, is to be avoided unless proper arrangements have been made with the immediate supervisor.
- 2.11. Personal listening devices are not to be used while working alone, as the device compromises personal safety by eliminating or limiting the worker's ability to hear anyone or anything in the area.
- 2.12. Should a worker need immediate assistance when working alone the following options are available (provided the worker can reach them):
 - 2.13. Use a phone or PA system to call the office
 - 2.14. Call 9-1-1 from a landline within the building
 - 2.15. Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone (if worker has one)
 - 2.16. If the worker cannot access either a landline or cell phone, the fire alarm may be pulled as a last resort. This will activate the security system and emergency services will be dispatched. Fire alarm pull stations are located near the fire exits in the building.

3. Working Alone: Before and After Hours

- 3.1. While working alone in the building, employees shall ensure that all building exterior doors are locked **at all times** to prevent unauthorized entry.
- 3.2. When the public is scheduled to use the building, doors should be unlocked 15 minutes prior to the event.
- 3.3. Workers must avoid arguments and confrontation with members of the public (e.g. rental groups) when working alone. If at any time a situation appears to put the worker at risk, the worker should cease work, leave the area, and immediately report it to their immediate supervisor.
- 3.4. Employees should notify a family member or friend of your location, provide them a phone number where you can be contacted on the premises (mobile or land line) and when you are scheduled to arrive back home. This person should be prepared to contact you if you are late arriving home. Be sure to contact them if you have a change in plans.
- 3.5. Consider carrying a cell phone so you can contact someone in the event of an emergency.
- 3.6. External security checks are to be done during daylight. After daylight security checks are to be done from inside the building.

- 3.7. Park his/her vehicle in a well-lit, easily visible location as close to the building exit as possible.
- 3.8. In case of emergency, suspicious activity or trespassers, call 911, your immediate supervisor or the appropriate community emergency response.
- 3.9. When a worker arrives at any Board facility and there is indication of forced entry, suspicious activity, trespassers or the sounding of an intrusion alarm, they **MUST NOT ENTER THE BUILDING**. The worker is to wait for police to arrive.
- 3.10. For staff that regularly work alone in the building, a safe area should be determined where staff may go to protect themselves and to report any suspicious behaviour or intruders in the building. The worker or worker group should determine this procedure with the immediate supervisor.
- 3.11. Garbage should be disposed of in the dumpster before dark or the next morning.
- 3.12. Stand-alone Portables should be locked when not in use. Staff that work in unattached portable classrooms are encouraged to confine their work activities in their portable to regular school working hours.
- 3.13. Should a worker need immediate assistance when working alone after hours the following options are available (provided the worker can reach them):
 - 3.13.1. Call 9-1-1 from a landline within the building
 - 3.13.2. Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone (if worker has one)
 - 3.13.3. If the worker cannot access either a landline or cell phone, the fire alarm maybe pulled as a last resort. This will activate the security system and emergency services will be dispatched. Fire alarm pull stations are located near the fire exits in the building.
- 3.14. All division facilities have an alarmed security system that is activated at 11:00 p.m.
- 3.15. After work, walk around the vehicle; check the back seat before unlocking the vehicle.

4. Working Alone: Home Visits

- 4.1. Home visits should not be the first option. Workers should try to arrange a mutually acceptable alternate location.
- 4.2. It is recommended that workers carry a personal cell phone during home visits.
- 4.3. If they feel unsafe, workers may refuse to proceed with a home visit until an alternative plan is established.

- 4.4. At any time the worker can arrange for a second staff member to accompany them to the home visit.
- 4.5. The employee should be aware of the risk posed by animals. If an employee feels unsafe, they should remain in the car until the animal has been secured.
- 4.6. A review of the case files should be done prior to a visit to identify any risks of violence (behaviours, triggers, etc.).
- 4.7. The worker should inform their immediate supervisor or designated staff contact when they are leaving for a home visit. Identifying information such as name, address, telephone number, and time of appointment and time due back to office or to the next scheduled appointment should be given to the contact.
- 4.8. Workers should position themselves in the home so they are closest to the door if a quick exit is required.
- 4.9. Workers are asked to be aware of their surroundings and personal safety. Use common sense, trust your instincts and if a situation feels dangerous or threatening – leave, saying for example that you need something from your car.

Reference: Saskatchewan's Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996, Section 35
Saskatchewan School Boards Association Lone Worker Policy
AP 512 Cash in School Buildings

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