

Lone Working and Out of Hours Working

Health and Safety Standard and Guidance

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Contents

1.	Executive Summary	3
2.	Queen Mary University of London - Statement of Policy on Lone Working and Out of Hours Working and Objective of the Standard	3
3.	Scope and Application of the Standard	3
4.	Definitions (Glossary)	4
4.1	Lone Worker:.....	4
4.2	Normal Working Hours and 'Out of Hours' Worker:	4
5.	Legislation	4
6.	Roles and Responsibilities	4
6.1.	The Head or Director of a Department / Directorate, School or Institute.....	4
6.2	Line Managers	5
6.3	The Lone Worker / Out of Hours Worker	6
6.4	The Director of Estates and Facilities	7
6.5	Department / Directorate /School / Institute and Building / Facilities Managers	8
6.6	Safety Coordinators.....	8
6.7	Occupational Health and Safety Directorate	9
7	Monitoring	9
8	Guidance on Lone Working.....	9
8.1	Introduction	9
8.2	Prohibitions on Working Alone / Out of Hours Work:	10
9	Risk Assessments for Working Alone / Out of Hours:.....	12
10	Training, Competency and Supervision:.....	14
11	Accidents, emergencies and illness:.....	14
12	QMUL 'Generic' Risk Assessment Template for Lone and/or Out of Hours Working and Topic Risk Assessment Guidance / Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).....	15
13	Further QMUL Reference Documents:	16
14	HSE Guidance	16

1. Executive Summary

This Health and Safety Standard 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 Standard is to eliminate or where not reasonable practicable, reduce the arising risks to a negligible level. The Standard defines lone working and out of hours working in the context of QMUL's activities; identifies the roles and responsibilities for Heads/Managers of Schools / Institutes / Directorates, and for staff, students and others who may be affected, and 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 Standard has been issued following consultation with Heads/Managers of Schools/Institutes/Directorates, the QMUL Health & Safety Advisory Group and staff/student representatives.

2. Queen Mary University of London - Statement of Policy on Lone Working and Out of Hours Working and Objective of the Standard

The Policy of Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) is to ensure that the risks arising from working alone and/or working out of hours on QMUL premises are eliminated or reduced to a negligible level as far as is reasonably practicable. The objective of the Standard is to ensure the continued health, safety and welfare of employees (staff), students and others who may be affected by the risks.

3. Scope and Application of the Standard

This Standard 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 Standards and Guidance on 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 Standards for Fieldwork or Travel for Work on the Occupational Health and Safety Directorate (OHSD) website <http://qm-web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/standard/index.html> .

Health and Safety Standard for Fieldwork Revised Standard - To Be Issued by OHSD (Autumn 2014)

Health and Safety Standard – Travel for Work *New Standard - To Be Issued by OHSD (Autumn 2014)*

4. **Definitions (Glossary)**

4.1 **Lone Worker:**

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

4.2 **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, 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 a School / Institute / Department or Directorate 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.

5. **Legislation**

General duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act etc 1974 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 normal working 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 Standard in terms of typical QMUL activities.

6. **Roles and Responsibilities**

6.1. **The Head or Director of a Department / Directorate, School or Institute** is responsible* for:

- a. Ensuring, in line with this Standard, that the planning and implementation of Procedures and Arrangements (including emergency

procedures and emergency contacts) to eliminate, or where not reasonably practicable to eliminate, control and reduce to negligible levels, the risks arising from persons in their Department/Directorate, School or Institute who work alone and/or out of normal working hours.

b. Ensuring that the appropriate risk assessment for lone working / out of hours working has been carried out, granting permission for lone working / out of hours working where significant risks are involved, and ensuring that the appropriate health and safety control measures have been implemented.

c. Ensuring the local Lone Working and Out of Hours Procedures and Arrangements (including training and competency of those working alone and/or out of hours) are clearly and explicitly laid out in Department's / Directorate's, School's or Institute's Handbooks and/or on their websites.

d. Ensuring Lone Working and Out of Hours procedures form part of local inductions / refresher inductions and 'familiarisation tours' given to staff, students and visitors / contractors.

e. Reviewing the arrangements for lone working and out of hours working periodically to ensure their continued effectiveness

f. Taking appropriate corrective action when non-compliance is brought to their attention.

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

6.2 **Line Managers*** (Academic Supervisors, Managers / Supervisors, Hosts of Visitors / Contractors)

All line managers are responsible** for

a. Carrying out and approving a risk assessment for lone working and out of hours working risks for the person/s they line manage, supervise, instruct or host. If they delegate this duty, they should ensure that the person carrying out the risk assessment is competent to do so.

b. Where **significant** risks are involved, obtaining permission from their Head or Director of Department / Directorate, School or Institute for themselves and/or the persons they line manage, supervise, instruct or host for lone working / out of hours working.

c. Ensuring that any identified health and safety control measures are implemented, that they eliminate or reduce the risks to negligible levels, and ensure they are monitored for effectiveness.

d.Ensuring that the lone /out of hours worker is competent in the work technique, use of health and safety control measures and is fully knowledgeable about the emergency procedures.

e. If lone working is a regular occurrence, monitoring the individual by occasionally visiting them during the work, reviewing the work, ensuring the scope of the agreed work is not exceeded and checking that the risk assessment remains valid.

f. Report non-compliance to their Head or Director of Department/ Directorate, School or Institute.

g. Ensure accidents and incidents are reported as per QMUL incident reporting Standard. [http://qmul-web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/documents/standard/70771.pdf](http://qmul.web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/documents/standard/70771.pdf)

**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.*

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

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

a. Ensuring that they have obtained prior permission for lone working / out of hours working from their line manager/supervisor or host, and if significant risks are involved, their Head or Director of Department / Directorate, School or Institute.

b. Informing their line manager / supervisor and Head or Director of Department / Directorate, School or Institute if they have a health condition or disability that may increase risk from lone working / out of hours working.

For guidance on when disclosure may be appropriate, for health conditions, consult QMUL Occupational Health Service (OHS) and for disabilities, the Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS).

Contact Details:

OHS <http://qmul-web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/contact/Occupational%20Health%20Service/index.html>

DDS <http://www.dds.qmul.ac.uk/about/index.html>

c..Ensuring that the identified control measures are implemented.

d.Ensuring that they are familiar with the local arrangements for fire, first aid, spillages, power failures and other foreseeable emergencies.

e.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.

f.Informing their line manager immediately if there are any problems or changes to agreed arrangements.

g.Keeping within the scope of the agreed work and work areas.

h. Ensure accidents and incidents are reported as per the QMUL Accident and Incident Reporting Standard. <http://qm-web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/documents/standard/70771.pdf>

6.4 **The Director of Estates and Facilities** is responsible* for:

a.Providing up-to-date information on local security arrangements to Heads or Directors of Departments / Directorates, Schools and Institutes.

b.Working with Heads or Directors of Departments / Directorates, Schools and Institutes / Faculty and Department / Directorate / School / Institute / Faculty Managers (or Building and/or Facilities Managers if the task/s is delegated to them), and external QML premises users, to control access to buildings/areas under their control or remit, both during and outside normal working hours.

c.Assisting the Heads or Directors of Departments/Directorates, Schools or Institutes in assessing the access control requirements and implementing suitable control measures for out of hours working (see section 6 below for recommended control measures)

d.Granted staff and students access to buildings and areas as authorised by the relevant Head or Director of Department / Directorate, School and Institute.

e.Granted contractors / visitors access to only those places and for those 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).

f. Informing Heads or Directors of Departments / Directorates, Schools and Institutes of instances of non-compliance recorded by Security Officers or other Estates & Facilities Officers on the next working day or at the earliest opportunity.

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

6.5 Department / Directorate / School / Institute and Building / Facilities Managers

Department / Directorate / School / Institute and Building / Facility Managers are responsible* for:

a. Ensuring, under the direction of their Head or Director of Department / Directorate, School or Institute, that local procedures and arrangements for lone working / out of hours working are drawn up and implemented. (including building / area access control arrangements, local security arrangements, health and safety arrangements e.g. first aid, medical assistance, local health and safety advice)

b. Ensuring staff, students and others in their areas of control are informed of facilities management and building-related issues which may increase the risk to those who work alone or outside of normal working hours.

c. Under the direction of their Head or Director of Department / Directorate, School or Institute, monitor and review the arrangements for lone working and out of hours working periodically to ensure effectiveness.

d. Under the direction of their Head or Director of Department / Directorate, School or Institute, take the appropriate corrective action when non-compliance is brought to their attention.

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

6.6 Safety Coordinators

Department / Directorate / School / Institute Safety Coordinators are responsible for

a. Assisting their Head or Director of Department/Directorate, School and Institute and School / Institute / Building / Facility Managers, to

develop and implement local procedures and arrangements for lone working / out of hours working

b. Assisting their Head or Director of Department / Directorate, School or Institute and Department / Directorate / School / Institute / Building / Facility Managers to monitor and review the arrangements for lone working and out of hours working periodically to ensure effectiveness.

c. Assisting their Head or Director of Department / Directorate, School or Institute and Department / Directorate / School / Institute / Building / Facility Managers to take the appropriate corrective action when non-compliance is brought to their attention.

6.7 Occupational Health and Safety Directorate are responsible for

a. Providing QMUL management, staff and students advice, guidance , tools and templates for the assessment of lone working and out of hour working risks and the implementation of effective and adequate control measures.

b. Monitoring the local arrangements and procedures for lone working and out of hours working by pro-active and reactive measurements, auditing compliance with this Standard, and ensuring the Standard remains robust and up to date.

c. Investigating incidents, accidents and significant near misses arising from breaches and non-compliance of this Standard and recommending corrective actions.

d. Reporting to Senior QMUL Management on the effectiveness of QMUL Lone Working and Out of Hours Working Management Procedures and Arrangements and recommending improvements.

7 Monitoring

The compliance by QMUL Departments / Directorates / Schools and Institutes with this Standard are monitored by the regime of health and safety self-inspections, peer review inspections and audits and by reports to the Department / Directorate / School / Institute Health and Safety Groups and the Faculty / Professional Services H&S Management 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 OHSD.

8 Guidance on Lone Working

8.1 Introduction

Because of the very large range of activities/tasks carried out by staff, students and others at QMUL, it is impractical to set prescriptive rules for lone

working . For example, persons working alone in offices carrying out typical office activities outside normal working hours are unlikely to be at significant risk, provided adequate fire, security and communication procedures are in place, whereas a person working alone in a laboratory is much more likely to be at significant risk. *Therefore, **risk assessment** of the tasks / activities undertaken by someone lone working and / or working out of hours is **crucial** in identifying the level of risk to the lone / out of hours worker.* Appropriate arrangements involving assistance or back-up are subsequently dependant on the level of risk from the intended activity or task.

Guidance on how to eliminate or adequately control risks from significantly hazardous tasks / activities typically conducted on QMUL Premises and web links to risk assessment template/s and further QMUL / HSE documents are provided below.

8.2 Prohibitions on Working Alone / Out of Hours Work:

Lone working / out of hours working must not be undertaken where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk that the work might result in an accident which would be sufficiently serious to require a second person to be available to summon help.

Those activities that lone / out of hours workers must not carry out under any circumstances must be documented in risk assessment records.

There are **certain work activities in which lone working is specifically prohibited in the Guidance accompanying Health and Safety legislation:**

a. Entry into and/or work in confined spaces where the following conditions may arise -

Confined spaces where there may be inadequate ventilation, risk of toxic gas release and/or where oxygen may be depleted to a dangerous level.

Examples of confined / partially confined spaces where oxygen may be depleted / toxic gases accumulate or are released or ventilation may be significantly impaired - tanks, manholes, pipes, flues, ducts, ceiling voids, enclosed basement rooms, store rooms, dark rooms, cold rooms, cryogenic liquid storage rooms.

b. Use of unsecured ladders

Use of ladders which cannot be secured must always be "footed" by a second person.

c. Scaffolding

When scaffolding or scaffolding towers are being erected or dismantled at least two people must be present.

d. Use of dangerous machinery

Persons are prohibited from working alone at the machines listed below, **unless** they have received sufficient training using the machines **and** they are 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. A written record of the training and competency for the task must be kept.

- i. Woodworking machines
- ii. Dough mixers
- iii. Meat mincing machines
- iv. Metal milling machines
- v. Guillotine machines
- vi. Slicing equipment machines used in laboratories (e.g. microtome) or catering (both powered and manual)
- vii. Hydraulic and pneumatic power presses
- viii. Potato chipping machines
- ix. Food mixing machines when used with attachments for mincing, slicing, chipping or any other cutting operations or for crumbing
- x. High speed centrifuges, high speed homogenisers and liquidisers.

e. Work on or near live electrical conductors

Persons carrying out work on or near live electrical conductors must be accompanied by another person. The Electricity at Work Regulations give the following examples of electrical work where it is recommended that the person carrying out the work should be accompanied:

- i. Electrical work involving manipulation of live, un-insulated power conductors at above 240 volts using insulated tools.
- ii. 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. Unpredictable client / customer behaviour - in situations where immediate assistance may be needed – e.g. student night events, social science / psychiatric interviews with highly unpredictable/violent/aggressive clients

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 into.

- i. *Young persons* (those under 18 years of age), must **not** work alone on QMUL premises.

9 Risk Assessments for Working Alone / Out of Hours:

Establishing safe working arrangements / procedures for lone / out of hours workers is no different from organising for other health and safety matters for staff students and others (visitors / contractors). The first consideration is whether the risks associated with the activity can be reduced to a negligible level and be adequately controlled by one person. Lone and out of hours workers should not be exposed to significantly higher risks than non-lone workers/normal hours workers.

Precautions should take account of normal working conditions and foreseeable emergency situations, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. All situations where staff, students and others may be working alone should be identified and the following questions asked.

a. Is lone working prohibited in the circumstances as identified under legal Guidance? (see 8.2 above)

b. Does the workplace present a significant risk to the lone / out of hours worker?

If only low risk tasks in those areas are being planned, then provided other risks were minimised and a system of checking or line of communication established, then it may be reasonable for a person to work alone. However, a robust risk assessment must have addressed significant foreseeable risks and put in effective health and safety controls.

c. Is there safe access and exit for that person?

In the evenings and at weekends, some doors which provide an exit from buildings during normal working hours may be locked for security reasons. All means of escape required during normal working hours must be available wherever a person works in the building outside normal working hours. The mechanism for opening doors on exit routes may be different outside normal working hours and all lone workers must therefore be made aware of exit routes and procedures for leaving the building.

d. Can one person safely handle all the plant and equipment needed?

It may be heavy, awkward, unstable, large, etc. More than one person may be necessary to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.

e. Can the substances and materials involved in the work be handled safely by one person?

The handling of hazardous substances, e.g. substances which are subject to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations, Dangerous Substances and Explosives Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) and the Ionising Radiation Regulations , (e.g. flammable, cryogenic, radioactive or pathogenic materials) must be considered carefully. 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 risk levels.

Examples

- Handling of pathogenic / hazardous biological / clinical samples within a cryogenic liquid store – recommendation is that this should be conducted as a two-person operation, and out of hours working avoided (see 8.2 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..

f. Will cash be handled and will there be a significant risk of violence / aggression against the lone worker / out of hours worker ?

g. Is the lone worker medically fit to work alone?

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.

10 Training, Competency and Supervision:

a. Training and the assessment of competency of the individual for the task is particularly important where there is limited supervision. It may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations, and lone / out of hours workers, therefore need to understand the risks involved in the work, the necessary precautions and be sufficiently experienced.

b. Departments / Directorates, Schools or Institutes should therefore establish clear procedures in line with this Standard, 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. OHSD can provide training, awareness and advice on this topic, and Departments / Directorates / Schools and Institutes should contact OHSD to facilitate this.

c. 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.

d. 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.

11 Accidents, emergencies and illness:

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

b. Local Emergency Procedures must be established by the Department / Directorate, School or Institute 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.

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

<http://qm-web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/documents/standard/70771.pdf>

d. Liaison and establishment of effective lone and 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 Department / Directorate, School or Institute.

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

f. 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).

g. 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.

12 **QMUL 'Generic' Risk Assessment Template for Lone and/or Out of Hours Working and Topic Risk Assessment Guidance / Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

Risk Assessment template

<http://qm-web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/documents/1/115612.docx>

Risk Assessment Guidance and FAQ's

<http://qm-web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/standard/index.html>

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

Some Departments / Directorates / Schools / Institutes may have their own risk assessment template specifically based for their activities – consult your local Safety Coordinator

<http://www.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/contact/Safety%20Coordinators/index.html>

13 Further QMUL Reference Documents:

Health and Safety Guidance for Managers

<http://qm-web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/documents/standard/64339.pdf>

14 HSE Guidance

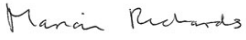
HSE Guidance on Working Alone <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>

HSE micro website on Lone Working

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/workalone.htm>

Document Control

Version 2

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