
Working Alone Safety Policy

Department Policy Number

170 005

Effective Date

September 7, 2004

Purpose

To assess the workplace and take preventable measures to eliminate or minimize risks when employees are alone. To ensure employees who work alone have a means of communication with individuals who can respond to an emergency situation. To ensure all Athabasca University employees understand and meet ethical and legal obligations.

Definitions

Hazard	Means a situation, condition, or thing that may be dangerous to the safety or health of employees.
Working Alone	This policy applies if a worker is working alone at a work site where assistance is not readily available if there is an emergency or the worker is ill or injured.
Work Site	Any location where Athabasca University business is performed is considered part of the work site, including traditional office and plant environments, field locations, collaborative sites, vehicles, or other off-site work locations. This does not include the home office.

Policy

Athabasca University is committed to implementing a system to support the safety and security of employees working alone. Each department must conduct a hazard assessment and eliminate or control the hazards of working alone. The hazard assessment must be reviewed on an annual basis or when work processes are introduced or changed and signed off by the department manager. Management will:

Conduct hazard assessments to identify existing or potential working alone hazards at Athabasca University.



Take measures to eliminate or control the hazards of working alone at Athabasca University.

Ensure that affected workers are informed of the hazards and methods used to control or eliminate them.

Provide an effective system for communication between any worker who works alone and persons capable of assisting the worker.

Ensure incidents are reported, investigated and documented.

Employees will:

Report all incidents of work site incidents immediately to their supervisor as required by WCB.

Participate in work site hazard assessments and the implementing of procedures to eliminate or control hazards of working alone.

Regulation

N/A

Hazard Assessment Procedure

The Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code states that the employer must assess the work site and identify existing or potential hazards. The assessment must be repeated at reasonably practicable intervals, or when a new work process is introduced, or when a work process or operation changes, or before the construction of a new work site. The following process outlines the steps of the hazard assessment to be conducted.

Step 1 - Establish Departmental Hazard Assessment Team

Each departmental team will be composed of members of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC), management and employees who work alone, including employees who work alone:

and handle cash, cheques, and credit card information.

and are without routine interaction with others.

and are at risk of workplace violence because their work site is isolated from public view.

when they travel alone on University business.



Step 2 - Conduct a Hazard Assessment

The hazard assessment team will identify previous incidents, within the respective department, related to working alone that have occurred at Athabasca University and gather information on both common and unique types of working alone incidents that have occurred at other distance education or post-secondary educational institutions. Any issues or trends that emerge from the information collected will be identified and potential solutions will be noted.

Step 3 - Obtain Employee Input

Through methods such as one-on-one interviews, focus groups, employees' surveys and work site inspections the hazard assessment team will collect and document information from employees about their experiences working alone, their current concerns, and their suggestions for improvement.

Step 4 - Hazard Analysis

In collaboration with affected employees the hazard assessment team will analyze the information collected and identify working alone hazards and means of elimination or control.

Step 5 - Evaluation and Hazard Control

The departmental hazard assessment team will prioritize the working alone hazards that have been identified, evaluate possible means of elimination or control. When reasonably practicable departmental controls will be implemented. University wide controls will be implemented. University wide controls will be recommended to the Executive Group through the OHSC for implementation. Controls implemented after the initial departmental hazard assessments (2003) include:

Restricted building access to the building - card key after regular working hours.

Department doors should be locked when working alone after hours (see Security Policy).

Check road reports and weather forecast before traveling.

DO NOT travel if road conditions are dangerous.

Develop a travel plan that includes rest breaks, a procedure for tracking overdue employees and emergency contact information.

All university fleet vehicles are equipped with cell phones and first aid kits. It is advisable to carry a first aid kit, emergency supplies and a cell phone when traveling in a personal vehicle.

It is advisable to travel with a colleague when possible.

Park close to the building in the evening.



Post signage, emergency contact information, and develop a communication system.

Individuals working alone at the Athabasca site at night may telephone Campus Security Services and provide the following information: name, office location, phone number, estimated time of departure, mode of travel, vehicle description, parking location. Call Security before departing. Security Services will make every effort to visit you when you are working alone and ensure you get to your vehicle safely, if requested.

Report suspicious activity to Security at AU Facilities and Services.

The Security Services telephone line is pre-programmed to 9-911.

Communication System

As required by the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code each department will provide effective radio, telephone or other electronic communication between a worker who works alone and persons capable of assisting the worker in an emergency or if the worker is injured or ill. If electronic communication is not applicable or readily available at the work site, the employer will ensure:

the employer or another competent worker visits the work site.

the employee contacts the employer or other competent worker.

Contact will be at regular intervals appropriate to the nature of the hazards associated with the employee's work.

Training

As required by the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, Athabasca University will ensure that affected workers are informed of working alone hazards at AU and the methods used to control or eliminate them. Employee training will be offered to increase awareness of methods for identification, hazard reduction and prevention when working alone and dealing with situations or individuals that present a potential risk.

Approved by

Executive Group

Amended Date/Motion No.

Related References, Policies, and Procedures

[Fleet Vehicle Policy](#) [Security Policy](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)

Harassment Policy for Employees Preventing Workplace Violence

[Student Nonacademic Misconduct Policy](#)



Applicable Legislation/Regulation

[Alberta Workplace Health and Safety General Safety Act, Regulation and Code 28 Working Alone](#)

[Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

[University Collective Agreements](#)

[Workers Compensation Board Act](#)

Responsible Position/Department

Director, Human Resources

Keywords

Occupational Health and Safety, working alone, workplace safety, hazards, hazard assessment