

WORKING ALONE

Background:

Part 28 of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Code establishes requirements for employers and employees to follow if employees work alone.

Definitions:

Confined or Restricted Space:

is an enclosed or partially enclosed space that is not designed or intended for continuous human occupancy—for example, crawlspace, air handling unit, serviced tunnel.

Working Alone:

means to work alone at a worksite, with no one else present, or in areas of a building that are isolated from view or hearing distance—for example, rooftop, vehicle, boiler room, separate wing of a large building—and where assistance is not readily available in the event of an emergency.

Procedures:

1. Principals, directors, managers, supervisors and contractors shall first consider strategies to eliminate situations where employees work alone. Strategies include establishing administrative procedures that address acceptable hours of work, promote a buddy system and identify what types of tasks can be safely performed alone.
2. Employees and contractors shall not work alone when conducting tasks that present a higher risk of injury unless acceptable controls are in place. Controls include establishing a system of visible or audible contact with a person who can readily provide assistance in the event of an emergency.
 - 2.1. Control strategies may include visiting the worker at specified intervals, scheduling check-ins with other staff and reporting to a designated person on completion of a task.
3. Employees and contractors shall not work alone when conducting higher-risk tasks. Higher risk-tasks may include working at heights, with powered equipment, inside a confined or restricted space, or working with potentially violent or aggressive students.
4. Principals, directors, managers, supervisors and contractors shall:
 - 4.1. identify employees who work alone and conduct a hazard assessment involving employees at the worksite to identify existing or potential hazards arising from the conditions and circumstances of the employee's work;
 - 4.2. take reasonable and practicable steps to eliminate or control the hazards identified by the hazard assessment;
 - 4.3. ensure the hazard assessment and controls are communicated to employees involved and further hazard assessments are conducted at intervals of time appropriate to the conditions and circumstances of the work;

- 4.4. provide access to an effective communication system that includes regular contact with a designated person at intervals appropriate to the nature of the hazard associated with the work, and may consist of radio, landline, cellphone or some other means of electronic or visual communication; and
- 4.5. establish and communicate to employees a written school- or department-specific protocol outlining the safe-work procedures or practices in place to protect employees working alone.

Reference:

Section 52, 53, 222 *Education Act*

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code

[Working Alone Hazard Assessment Checklist \(Form 405-1\)](#)

[Working Alone Protocol Templates](#)