

Title:	Working Alone In Laboratories
Approved by:	Environmental health and Safety
Effective Date:	01/01/2015
Responsible Official:	Environmental Health and Safety
Responsible University Office:	Environmental Health and Safety
Revision History:	None
Related Legislation and University Policy:	EPA, DOT, OSHA, FDA
Review Period:	5 years
Last Review Date:	9/18/2019
Relates to:	All of CWRU Community

Summary:

Working alone in a laboratory can place a person in a hazardous situation. Should an injury occur, working alone without a plan to address injuries, accidents, or other unforeseen incidents is an unacceptable and preventable risk. This policy covers the basic requirements for working alone in a laboratory. It should be stressed that working alone is not the desired first line of planning and should be avoided. Some activities are prohibited as working alone activities and are specifically delineated.

Purpose:

To provide guidance on the requirements for working alone in laboratories and to specifically describe prohibited activities.

Definitions:

Working Alone-Per OSHA:

A person is "**alone**" at **work**

The University's Laboratory Safety Committee (LSC) has recognized that there are special, greater potential hazards and risks associated with laboratory personnel working alone in the lab with Biological, Chemical, Radiological materials and special hazards such as High Pressure, High Voltage, and Cryogenic physical hazards. The risk of injury is increased and so is the risk of the seriousness of the injury. These are very serious problems indeed, and ones that have occurred at other universities.

EH&S and the LSC recommended that no one work alone with hazardous materials in the lab, but we also recognize that there are circumstances where this may be necessary. As a result, a program has been developed where working alone must be authorized by the responsible Principal Investigator (PI) of the lab. The authorization form is can be found below along with a list of after-hours prohibited activities. If an activity is not prohibited, the Primary Investigator along with the research staff member can assemble a work plan to address after hours work. If the activity planned is on the prohibited list, it may still be performed in most cases after hours so long as a buddy is in attendance for the work and notification of the CWRU Communications center is given. The work plan must be approved by EH&S for any prohibited activities after hours.

[Permission To Work Alone Authorization Form-Work Plan](#)
Prohibited After Hours Activities

The Permission to Work Alone Authorization form requires the PI to evaluate activities that would help mitigate or prevent an accident or injury to the person working alone. These may include: limiting activity to certain hours, limiting activity with certain materials, establishing a system where one could contact help immediately (CWRU Alert), and of course, limiting the work to trained and qualified personnel. If you have a need to work alone after hours, please review the form, complete it and submit it to EH&S. If you need any assistance in establishing procedures to mitigate the hazards and risks, do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to help you through this process.

PERMISSION TO WORK ALONE FORM GUIDELINES

Scope:

This applies to any work that will be performed alone involving hazardous materials, hazardous procedures or hazardous equipment.

Rationale:

The objective of Permission to Work Alone is to prevent a scenario where a worker is injured due to hazardous work and is unable to get help. It is up to each Principal Investigator (PI) to determine what level of hazard is permissible for working alone in their group. Some groups do not allow any working alone at all, while others allow varying degrees of working alone, depending on the specific hazard, the training and experience of the person working, and the safeguards that are in place. The PI and the worker need to agree that the level of risk matches the level of protection. The Permission to Work Alone form clarifies and documents this. It assures the PI that workers won't undertake unapproved hazardous processes alone and it assures the worker that the processes they are performing alone have been assessed for safety.

Chemical Hazards

"Hazardous Materials" are defined by the hazards indicated on the Safety Data Sheets, product labels or pictograms. A material is

Section I:

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF WORK TO BE DONE:

Please describe the specific type of work to be done (such as synthesis of X compounds, preparation of X samples, running of X equipment, conducting X type of experiment).

HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR WORK:

Please indicate the hazards associated with your materials, procedures or equipment. If "other" is checked, please indicate the specific hazard(s).

Section II:

DURATION OF Aocce(sABOV

PERMISSION TO WORK ALONE FORM

SECTION I: Applicant

Name: _____

CAMPUS PHONE NUMBER: _____ CELLPHONE NUMBER: _____

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: _____

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF WORK TO BE DONE:

HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR WORK:

Chemical Biological Radiological Physical OTHER _____

I have completed Lab Safety and Hazardous Waste training at **CWRU**. In addition, I have received training in the proper experimental and emergency procedures from my principal investigator and understand those procedures for the work I am authorized to do.

APPLICANT

EH&S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

CAMPUS PHONE: _____ EMERGENCY PHONE: _____

SECTION III: LAB SAFETY AND HAZARDOUS WASTE TRAINING

This applicant has completed laboratory safety and hazardous waste training provided by the Environmental Health and Safety Department (EH&S).

TRAINING DATE:

Prohibited Work Activities Working Alone

Chemical

Pyrophoric

- 1) Work outside of a dry inert Glove box with pyrophoric, or water reactive materials are prohibited. If the work can be done completely