

Subject: Working Alone	Effective Date: March 5, 2010	Initiated by: Head, ES&H Department
	Supersedes: Rev. 3 Dated July 3, 2004	Approved: Director

A person is considered to be working alone when, for more than a few minutes at a time, they are not within earshot or visual contact with another employee (“companion”) such that help could be made available in an emergency.

This policy applies to all personnel (regular, visiting, student, or subcontract) who work in the Laboratory. PPPL employees supervising the activities performed by non-PPPL workers must ensure that these workers are informed of and follow the requirements of this Policy.

Supervisors must determine, consistent with this Policy, whether it is safe for their employees to work alone while performing specific assigned tasks.

Any person planning to work alone on-site outside of normal Laboratory business hours should consider notifying a Security officer of their presence, particularly if the work involves potentially hazardous conditions (see “Conditionally Permitted Working Alone Activities” below).

PROHIBITIONS

Working alone is not permitted in the cases listed below:

- A. Confined space entry.
- B. Working on exposed, energized, electrical circuits operating at over 50 volts.
- C. Work requiring the use of SCBAs or supplied air equipment.
- D. Any work classified as a “tritium line break” or otherwise requiring continuous Health Physics support.
- E. Welding, cutting and brazing activities for which working alone is not permitted by ES&HD 5008, Section 9, Chapter 15.
- F. Working in the vicinity of a vacuum vessel window having an aperture ≥ 4 inches with no protective barrier when the vacuum vessel is not at atmospheric pressure (see ES&HD 5008, Section 9, Chapter 14).
- G. Troubleshooting activities that require rotating equipment to be operating with machine guards removed (see PPPL Policy P-045).
- H. Any work where fall protection is required (see ES&HD 5008, Section 9, Chapter 16).

In addition, some employees with medical impairments may not work alone. These conditions will be designated by the Occupational Medicine Office (OMO) as they become known.

Supervisors should refer employees to the Occupational Medicine Office (OMO) for evaluation if they have a question concerning their medical suitability for working alone.

To avoid working alone on an activity where working alone is not permitted, the "companion" must be advised by the employee or supervisor responsible for the activity that he/she must remain in a location such that help can be made available in an emergency to the employee performing the activity. This requirement is necessary to assure that the "companion" does not leave in the middle of the activity. Other requirements (e.g., functions of a safety watch or fire watch) may apply to the "companion" based on the activity.

CONDITIONALLY PERMITTED WORKING ALONE ACTIVITIES

Working alone under potentially hazardous conditions is allowed only when the individual and the supervisor have reviewed the specific work to be performed and have determined that:

1. The work does not violate any of the specific prohibitions for working alone;
2. The work can be performed safely by the person working alone;
3. It can be ensured that adequate help can be made available quickly in an emergency.

The results of this determination must be documented by the worker and supervisor on a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) form (see ESH-004). The JHA form must be reviewed and signed by Industrial Hygiene prior to performing the work.

All work activities for which working alone is neither explicitly prohibited nor permitted by this Policy are to be considered conditionally permitted working alone activities.

Before conducting a conditionally permitted working alone activity, a worker should advise a co-worker, work supervisor or Security officer as to what work will be done and when the worker expects to return from the activity. Consideration should be given to arranging for someone (e.g., Emergency Services personnel) to perform regular periodic checks on the worker.

PERMITTED WORKING ALONE ACTIVITIES

The following are work activities that would normally be considered suitable for an employee to accomplish while working alone:

- A. Office work, including the use of common office machines, such as copiers, typewriters, personal computers, printers, etc. Also including computer operation, reading, filing, and typing.
- B. Routine Control Room activities, including the use of consoles, terminals, printers, etc.
- C. Routine technician hand work that is not part of a larger activity, including the use of hand tools, use of portable power tools, desktop computer installation, etc. [Note: provided these activities are performed by a qualified technician for whom these activities would be considered "skill of the trade" activities.]

- D. Drafting activities, including the use of computer assisted design terminals and workstations, drafting tables, stick files, etc.
- E. Information gathering (including, but not limited to: literature surveys; inventories; audits), analysis (including computer modeling), and dissemination (including, but not limited to: document mailings; publication; and distribution).
- F. Actions consisting solely of document preparation (including, but not limited to: conceptual design, feasibility, energy supply and demand, and other studies).
- G. Routine security patrols.
- H. Conducting inspections.
- I. Routine mail delivery.
- J. Working on positively de-energized electrical circuits and equipment rated 600 volts or less (see ES&HD 5008, Section 2, Chapter 3).