

CUPE Local 1004



WORKING ALONE AND IN ISOLATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

To establish a consistent approach to support staff who are working alone or in isolation, ensuring their safety while carrying out work-related tasks.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all CUPE Local 1004 staff, as well as officers, board and committee members working in the CUPE Local 1004 office.

POLICY

CUPE 1004 will take all reasonable steps to minimize the time staff work alone or in isolation. When this occurs, procedures will be in place to protect staff safety, prevent incidents, and monitor their wellbeing. This includes identifying and assessing hazards and risks, ensuring staff are informed, eliminating or minimizing hazards where possible, and implementing a written procedure for regularly checking on the wellbeing of staff.

DEFINITIONS

Working alone or in isolation: As defined by WorkSafeBC, working alone or in isolation means performing work in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker in case of emergency, injury, or ill health.

Readily available assistance: Assistance that is considered readily available is help that can be provided quickly by nearby individuals who are both aware of the situation and capable of offering timely support.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer:

- Identify, eliminate, or minimize risks for staff working alone or in isolation by implementing appropriate control measures.
- Ensure staff are trained and informed of working alone procedures.
- Provide appropriate communication tools (e.g., phone).
- Limit the time staff are working alone or in isolation.
- Establish a check-in and check-out procedure that ensures regular contact (visually or verbally) and a reliable method to verify each worker's wellbeing.
- Designate someone to conduct check-ins with staff at set intervals.
- Ensure an up-to-date list of all staff emergency contact numbers is maintained and readily accessible.

Staff:

- Follow all established safe work procedures when working alone or in isolation.
- Know how to contact the check-in person. Ensure contact information is up to date.

RISK IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Working alone or in isolation risks are identified and assessed through a standardized process that evaluates whether it is reasonable and safe for the employee to work alone,

considering the situation, location, time of day, and duration of the work, and establishes reasonable limits if needed.

RISK CONTROL

Minimizing working alone

- Appointments are scheduled to limit working alone, especially outside regular hours.
- Workflows are adjusted, when possible, to reduce time spent alone or in isolation.

General conditions

- Risks are controlled through measures such as locked doors, well-lit areas and parking lots, clear sightlines, and emergency alarms.

Check-in system

- A check-in procedure is in place, requiring staff working alone to check in at the start of their shift, at regular intervals based on risk level, and at the end of their shift.
- A designated, trained person monitors check-ins and responds to missed check-ins.

PROCEDURES

Emergency action plan

1. If a check-in is missed, the designate will immediately message the employee, wait a maximum of 15 minutes then attempt to contact the employee by phone.
2. A second attempt will be made within 30 minutes. If there is still no response, a third attempt will follow after five minutes. If the staff member remains unresponsive, their emergency contact will be notified.
3. If the emergency contact doesn't respond, can't be reached, or can't be found, the police will be notified and take over the safety response.

Missing a check-in

- Staff must take all reasonable steps to remain reachable during check-ins, including keeping phones charged and being at required locations.
- Staff must be present and available at the scheduled check-in times.
- If a check-in is missed, staff must immediately contact the designated check-in person to stop the emergency action plan.

Example: Staff working alone in the office outside regular hours, or at home, or visiting a site.

- At the start of your shift, sign-in with the designated check-in person (e.g., via call, text or Teams message). Indicate your name, location, and the estimated number of hours you will be working alone.
- Check in during your shift every four hours or when changing work locations.
- At the end of the shift, sign-out using the same method.
- If you fail to check-in during your shift or do not sign-out at the end, the designated check-in person will follow the emergency action plan.

TRAINING

All staff will receive orientation and annual refresher training on:

- The definition and risks of working alone or in isolation.
- Procedures for communication and check-ins.
- Emergency protocols and available resources.

ANNUAL REVIEW

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

REFERENCE

- WorkSafeBC - Working Alone or in Isolation Regulations
- WorkSafeBC - Working Alone or in Isolation Guidelines
- WorkSafeBC - Working Alone: A Handbook for Small Business

APPROVAL

Employer: CUPE Local 1004

Date: TBD
