

TOWN OF THREE RIVERS

Working Alone Policy

Policy Number: TRHR-2 Date of Approval: May 13, 2019

Approved By: Town Council Policy Reviewed: May 6, 2022

Policy Statement

The Town of Three Rivers recognizes the importance of providing a safe and secure work environment for its employees.

Employees who work alone in conditions that are considered hazardous are to have their status checked by another employee during their workday to verify that they have not encountered any health, safety or security incidents.

The frequency and method of checking on the individual will depend on the degree of work hazard and work environment.

The risk assessment process will be conducted by managers and/or supervisors to determine the hazard level. Workers will be required to use the "buddy system" for higher risk situations.

Definitions

Supervisor – is anyone responsible for the health and safety of the workers under their direction.

Working Alone – means working at a workplace where there is only one worker of the workplace and where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of injury, ill health or emergency. It does not apply where workers are working in open areas (street sweeping, grass cutting etc).

Buddy System – means a system of organizing work so that the worker can always be seen or heard by at least one other worker. In addition, the buddy system must include periodic checking of the person's safety.

Violence– the threatened, attempted or actual exercise of any physical force by a person that can cause, or that causes, injury to a person, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour that gives a person reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote awareness and ensure, as far as reasonably possible, the health and safety of employees who work alone.

Responsibility

Responsibility for implementation of this policy lies with all levels of Management. The supervisor in consultation with the worker determines the risk level of the work and the frequency and method of verifying the health and safety status of the worker when working alone. The supervisor must make every reasonable effort to ensure compliance by the worker.

General

The Safety Matters @ Work Workplace Violence and Guide to Working Alone are recommended resources to use in implementing this procedure.

Workplace Risk Assessment

Managers/supervisors will assess their workplace and all employees who are under their area of responsibility against the following criteria:

1. Do you have any workers who sometimes work alone (as defined above)?
2. Do you have any workers/volunteers who handle cash or other valuables, work with the public, work in areas where alcohol is served, work in isolated or low traffic areas and or work with unstable or volatile persons?

If the answer to either of these questions is “Yes”, a Workplace Risk Assessment for that employee or that activity must be completed with participation of the impacted employee(s). Appendix A contains a copy of the Risk Assessment Form. Both the supervisor and employee must sign the Workplace Risk Assessment and this form must be submitted to the Manager of Community Services.

Supervisors will, as applicable:

- Identify workers who may be in situations where the potential exists for working alone.
- Identify workers who may be in situations where the potential exists for violence in the workplace. Conduct risk assessments for each worker identified. This assessment will identify such things as hazards to the worker from the nature of work, isolation, location(s) and conditions at the work site(s).
- Identify necessary actions to eliminate or reduce the hazards and implement these actions

Eliminate or reduce hazards by:

- Providing written instructions stating limitations on and/or prohibition of specific activities while working alone
- Providing sufficient training and instruction for safe work practices and insuring a minimum standard of competence
- Providing applicable personal protective equipment
- Develop effective methods of communication for workers who work alone. The communication system must be based on the results of the Site-Specific Working Alone Safety Plan (check in procedures, periodic site visits, and telephone or radio communications)

The Site-Specific Working Alone Safety Plan can be completed for an individual or a group if similar hazards are identified. The plan is meant to be completed for the long term and must be reviewed at least yearly by the Department Manager and Supervisor together with the affected employee(s) to identify any change to tasks, equipment, space, hazards etc. Changes to the Site-Specific Working Alone Safety Plan must be communicated and acknowledged, in writing, with the affected employee(s). This plan will form part of any new employee orientation for that area.

Risk Factors to Consider

The supervisor of an area with higher risks will consider the following risk factors when completing the Site-Specific Working Alone Safety Plan:

- Degree of risk
- Tasks and associated hazards involved in the work to be performed (physical hazards, equipment or tools used, security, personal attacks)
- Consequences resulting from a "Worst Case" scenario
- Likelihood of others to be in the area
- Possibility that the incident could prevent the employee from calling for help
- Methods and frequency of regular communication and emergency assistance
- Confirmation where and when working alone is permitted
- Employee training and experience
- Employee physical and/or medical conditions
- Location of safety resources such as MSDS, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, fire pull alarm stations, eye wash stations, chemical spill clean up kits, telephones, SCBA
- Any other factors which the supervisor believe to be hazardous

Where there are certain operations that, due to the risk, cannot be performed alone. Schedule potentially dangerous work for time when supervisors and appropriate help will be available. Provide adequate staffing (buddy system) for hazardous tasks performed in off-hours, remote locations or the nature of the job involves more than one person.

- Working alone is prohibited when the work involves the following:
- Confined space entry
- Working in trenches
- Working with high voltage electrical systems
- Working from a ladder
- Using fall arrest equipment and scaffolding
- Machine and power tools that could cause critical injury (chain saw)
- Use of self-contained breathing apparatus or mask
- Risk of drowning
- Use of large equipment near power lines
- Use of a vehicle or equipment where the operator does not have full view of the intended path of travel
- Welding operations where fire watch is required
- Tasks which, based on the Site-Specific Working Alone Safety Plan, are deemed to require more than one person.

Employees who sometime work late or return to work outside of normal working hours must take personal responsibility for establishing an informal communications plan with a family member or another responsible individual. This informal arrangement should be communicated to that employee's immediate supervisor.

Working Alone Checklist

The supervisor shall provide an SOP including, but not limited to, the following:

- Identifying the individual and work location
- Identifying the possible risks
- Identifying the required communication systems
- Outlining the procedures to eliminate or minimize the identified risks
- Providing details of how emergency assistance will be obtained in the event of an injury or incident
- Maintaining a copy of the SOP on file and updating procedures as necessary

Indicate Yes, No, N/A for Employee Training

- _____ Do you ensure employees are trained and competent to work alone safely?
- _____ Are employees aware of the hazards associated with working in isolation?
- _____ Are employees trained in non-violent responses to threatening situations?
- _____ Are employees trained in the proper use of security systems to prevent and/or discourage intruders?
- _____ Are employees trained in the questioning of strangers about the appropriateness of their presence?
- _____ Are employees aware of the increased risk from carrying out the hazardous work alone?

Indicate Yes, No, N/A for Safe Work Procedures

- _____ Do you have a safe work procedure to secure the work site?
- _____ Will workers be handling controlled products or money?
- _____ Does the safe work procedure include appropriate behaviors when confronted with an intruder?
- _____ Is there a requirement for personal protective equipment such as respiratory protection?
- _____ Is access to the work site controlled?
- _____ Is there a risk of a fall?
- _____ Do workers need to work alone? Can things be rescheduled to reduce the need for working alone?
- _____ Is cash kept to a minimum and is money locked in a safe or taken away while workers are alone?
- _____ Does the work site require a check prior to the start and at the end of the shift?

Indicate Yes, No, N/A for Communication

Do you have an effective means of two-way communication for employees to contact persons capable of responding when employees need immediate assistance?

If so, does the method of communication involve the use of:

- _____ Regular telephone/cell phone with a designated person?
- _____ Regular security patrol?
- _____ Alarm system to security services?
- _____ Regular visit by co-workers?
- _____ Others? Specify

Procedures must include:

- The name, address, location and telephone number of the workplace.
- The name, address, location, and telephone number of the employer.
- The nature of the business conducted at the workplace.
- Identification of the possible risks to each worker working alone that arise from, or in connection with, the work assigned.
- The steps to be followed to minimize these risks identified.
- Details of how a worker who is working alone can secure, and the employer can provide, assistance in the event of injury or other circumstances that may endanger the health and safety of the worker.

The procedure must state:

- Workers to be contacted and at what intervals.
- Who is to call and where the call will be recorded.
- What will happen if the worker misses a call or cannot be contacted. This includes how the workers will be rescued and by whom.
- What time the last call is expected.

It is important to note that the Youth Employment Act states that workers under the age of 16 must be supervised at all times. Therefore, employers complying with the Youth Employment Act must never allow young workers to work alone.

Working Alone Call Procedure

Workplace: Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Employer: Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

RISK: _____

Working alone call-in procedures for: _____
(position)

For work between _____ and _____ on _____
(time) (time) day(s) of the week

Person responsible for checking on the above noted worker

Call times (every two hours)

1 am ()

3 am ()

5 am ()

7 am ()

Method of contact:

Phone

Email

Face-to-face

Response will be logged in Check-in Log

If the worker cannot be reached and does not respond within _____ minutes
face to face contact will be made by:

Co-worker (name)

Supervisor (name)

Security

Police

The person responding will immediately inform the person responsible for face-to-face contact with the worker of the reason for the delay or any incidents.

Responsible person will call supervisor in the event of an accident.

Supervisor to call _____

If the worker encounters an unsafe situation the worker is to immediately contact the designated person for instruction and/or call the police if necessary.

**Contact phone number _____
(Also post by phone)**

These procedures will be reviewed at orientation and at least annually.

Any change in names or numbers will be made immediately.

Signature of worker

Date

Signature of Supervisor

Date