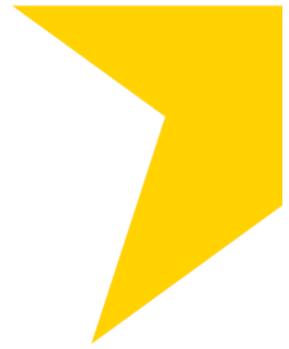


Actsafes Fact Sheet #14

WORKING ALONE OR IN ISOLATION



INTRODUCTION

Definition

Working alone or in isolation – According to the Regulation, to work alone or in isolation “means to work in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker in case of an emergency, or in case the worker is injured or in ill health.”

Working alone or in isolation is fairly common in the motion picture industry, particularly for production assistants, security guards, drivers, and flaggers. Working alone can have serious consequences if a worker sustains an injury or becomes ill and no one is available to help them.

Remote Locations

Remote and inaccessible locations, (i.e. where there is only one road in and out) are an area of concern for greenspersons and location scouts, who often go to remote locations in the performance of their duties.

British Columbia’s Occupational Health and Safety Regulation specifies that employers are responsible for developing and implementing procedures to help protect workers who are working alone or in isolation.

Regulatory Requirements

Sections 4.20.2 to 4.21 and 4.23 of the Regulation describe employer and supervisor responsibilities for workers who are working alone or in isolation. Sections 4.28 to 4.31 cover workplace violence — these may also be applicable, depending on the situation.

The following must be done *before* a worker is assigned to work alone or in isolation:

1. **Identify** hazards and assess the risks associated with them.
2. **Control** risks by eliminating hazards entirely or, if that is not possible, minimizing the risks.
3. **Educate** workers about hazards and how to control the risks associated with them.
4. **Develop and implement** a written person-check procedure for checking on lone workers.
5. **Review** procedures (see page 4).

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employers

Employers or Employer Representatives (producers, production companies, and subcontractors) are responsible for providing a safe and healthy work environment. This includes identifying potential hazards, finding ways to eliminate or minimize risks, and ensuring that supervisors and workers are trained to recognize hazards and work safely. As an employer, you must develop a written health and safety program that is specific to your workplace. It’s also important to respond promptly when a worker or supervisor informs you about a potential hazard. If an accident or injury occurs, make sure it is investigated so you can prevent similar incidents from occurring.



Supervisors

Supervisors (directors, assistant directors, technical directors, managers, crew chiefs, stunt coordinators, department heads, and anyone else who has the authority to direct workers) are responsible for the health and safety of workers under their direction. Supervisors need to recognize hazards and how to control risks, and they need to make sure their workers have this information. Supervision is an ongoing task, which means supervisors need to check with workers periodically to ensure that they are working according to their training and following safe work procedures.

Workers

Workers (performers, crew, technicians, and other production support positions) are responsible for following health and safety requirements and working according to their training. They must participate in training, as necessary, and use any required personal protective equipment. If you don't know how to do something safely, ask your supervisor for instruction or training before carrying out the task. If you see an unsafe condition, correct it immediately or report it to your supervisor. Workers should consider when they will be in positions that may require them to work alone or in isolation and bring those situations to the attention of their supervisor or employer.

1. Identify and assess

Employers can't protect workers if they don't know what potential dangers are present. That's why hazard identification and risk assessment are so important. Examples of potential hazards when working alone include:

- Working in a high-crime area
- Working at heights (for example, on ladders or scaffolds)
- Working with electricity or equipment
- Working in extreme conditions (for example, cold weather)
- Distance from or access to medical attention

When identifying hazards, consider the location and the types of tasks workers will be doing. Employers or supervisors should consult with the workers who will be working alone. Include the health and safety committee or worker representative in the process, where appropriate. Hazards may vary from place to place (and time to time), so a hazard identification must be done for each individual location and each new shoot or performance. Write down the results, and distribute copies to the cast and crew.

2. Control the risks

It's best to eliminate hazards entirely, whenever possible. If you can't eliminate a hazard, implement risk controls to minimize the risks associated with it. Risk controls may include engineering controls, administrative controls, and/or personal protective equipment. It may take a combination of controls to minimize the risks effectively.

Engineering controls are changes to the physical environment. For example, install guardrails on scaffolding or ensure adequate ventilation in the paint department.

Administrative controls are changes to work practices or activities. For example, rearrange the work schedule so two or more workers are present. A person-check procedure is an important type of administrative control for working alone.

Personal protective equipment should only be used as a control if other controls are not practical, or in addition to other controls. For example, a worker on a scaffold with guardrails is likely safer if a personal fall arrest system is also used.

Actsafes Fact Sheet #14 Working Alone or in Isolation



3. Educate workers

Knowledge is power — workers can't protect themselves if they don't know a hazard exists. Inform your cast and crew about any hazards that have been identified, and inform them about what they need to do to control the risks. There are various ways to communicate health and safety information, including:

- During worker orientation or training
- During crew meetings or safety talks
- On call sheets or in memos

4. Develop and implement a person-check procedure

If your production has workers who are working alone or in isolation, you must have a written procedure for checking on their well-being at regular intervals. Consult with your health and safety committee or worker representative when developing the procedure. Keep the specifics of the situation in mind to ensure that the procedure is effective. (See "Sample person-check procedure," on the following page.)

Basic requirements for a person-check procedure

Set time intervals between checks. For example, contact the lone worker every half hour or hour, depending on the level of risk. Check on the worker at the start and end of each work shift, as well. Consult with the worker being assigned to work alone when setting time intervals.

Designate a person (or contract a third-party service provider) who is responsible for establishing contact at regular intervals. The designated person or service provider must record each person-check contact.

Establish a way to contact lone workers — for example, via cell phone, texting, two-way radio (walkie-talkie), trunked radio, satellite phone, or email.

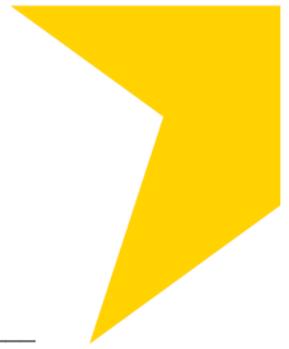
Describe steps to be taken if the lone worker cannot be contacted

Train the person assigned to check on the lone worker in the person-check procedure and make sure they know what to do if he or she is unable to make contact.

5. Evaluate and review

Periodically review your person-check procedure (and other health and safety procedures) to ensure that it is working effectively. Conduct reviews annually or more frequently if there is a change in the location, the work environment, or the work hours — or if it turns out that the procedures are not effective. When reviewing procedures, look for ways to improve them.

For further information, refer to: *Working Alone: A Handbook for Small Business* (WorkSafeBC publication): www.worksafefbc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/bk131.pdf



SAMPLE PERSON-CHECK PROCEDURE

Designated contact person/company:

Contact interval: every 30 minutes every hour every 2 hours other interval: _____

Method of contact: in person telephone radio other method _____

FAILURE TO MAKE CONTACT

SAMPLE PROCESS: Develop specific options for each situation

Worker: If you are unavailable at the predetermined person-check time, you will try to respond to the designated contact within five minutes.

Designated contact: If you cannot reach the lone worker, you will make another attempt within five minutes. If you still cannot reach the lone worker at that time, follow these steps:

1. Call another cast or crew member who is nearby, and have him or her check on the lone worker.
2. Call the studio or building security or an identified neighbouring business or building, if there is one, and have someone check on the lone worker.
3. If necessary, call 9-1-1 and send them to the location.

Emergency information

Worker: In case of an emergency, such as a fire or flood, contact the following person:

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Record of person-checks

DATE	TIME	INITIALS	NOTES

If needed, add pages for records of worker check-ins.