WORKING AFTER-HOURS OR ALONE GUIDELINE

Section	Health and Safety
Contact	University Health and Safety Manager
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Approval	University Health and Safety Manager

When working after-hours the risks of certain hazards may be increased due to the reduction in immediate assistance in the event of an incident. Outside of university core working hours, trained on site emergency response personnel may be unavailable. These may include: building and floor wardens for building evacuation, first aid trained staff, facility staff such as Laboratory Managers and student medical centres. Other services such as telephony and custodial services may not be available.

Risks may also be increased when working alone during working hours due to availability of immediate assistance.

Prior to allowing students or staff to work after-hours, their supervisor should assess the hazard or the work or facility using the following steps:
- Hazard risk assessment
  - Identify, assess, control the hazards
  - Determine supervision requirements
  - Determine emergency arrangements
- Competency of worker
- Approval to undertake the work
- Review of after-hours approval if activity or workplace changes.

Note:
The way the above requirements are met is flexible. Existing mechanisms that provide the intent of the steps in the procedure should continue to be used.

Examples are:
- **Laboratories using hazardous substances will have determined appropriate after-hours controls in Safe Methods of Use, as required by Code of Practice for CRI and University Exempt Laboratories. Laboratory managers should control approval. Competency assessment should be done in conjunction with student supervisors.**
- **Risk assessment for education outside the class room, field work, and practicum assessments should have determined hazards. If not already included, competency and approvals can be added to those existing systems.**
- **Ethics approval to work with drug users with a risk of violent behaviour may have already identified hazards, supervision, and approval requirements.**
- **Design workshop studios will have already determined which machinery is moderate to high risk, assessed student competency and access to the machinery.**

Each of the above steps is explained in more detail below.

Hazard assessment
A hazard risk assessment should be conducted for the work and after-hours work before the work commences. The hazard assessment should cover:
- identification of all foreseeable hazards arising from the work ,
- assessment the risk(s) of each hazard,
- control of the hazard to a level that is acceptable (reasonably practicable),
- availability of support in an emergency situation.

The hazard risk assessment identifies a rating for each hazard in the task or process eg low, moderate, high, or extreme. This rating is used to determine:
- the level of supervision required,
- the type of authorisation required,
- if the task is permitted to be undertaken by students or workers.

Appendix 1 details suggested types of approvals for each level of risk.

The following items may influence the hazard risk assessment outcome for after-hours or alone work:
- the number of people working in the area after-hours;
- security in the area where work is being undertaken;
- the level of emergency personnel assistance available after-hours in the event of an incident, e.g. fire wardens and first aid qualified staff;
- requirement to complete a building after-hours log book for evacuation checking;
- consequences of unattended experiments or equipment during after-hours work;
- competency and level of experience, skill and training of the individual undertaking the work;
- whether the substance, equipment or work is too hazardous or dangerous to be used after-hours;
- availability and requirement for a "buddy" for backup support or communication;
- ability of buddy to render assistance, support, or raise alarm;
- access to communication (e.g. phone, mobile phone, 2 way radio);
- the journey to and from where the work is being conducted and the mode of transport.

Hazard assessments must take into account the possible increase in risk because of reduced access to experienced staff and emergency services for after-hours work.

More detailed information on how to undertake a hazard assessment is available on the Health and Safety web site.

Competency of the worker
For moderate to high risk activities, the supervisor must determine and validate that the worker undertaking the after-hours work is competent to undertake the work. The supervisor should record the competency assessment.

Approval to undertake work
Supervisors should record approval given to undertake after-hours work. The record should include:
- duration of approval,
- procedure, equipment, areas that can be accessed/used,
- tasks that can be undertaken, and
- for moderate to high risk activities, detail of required controls in the hazard assessment, including monitoing and emergency procedures.

An example approval form for use with moderate and high risk hazards is at the end of this guidline.

Review of the after-hours approval if activity or workplace changes
A review of the after-hours approval is required when there is a change in the workplace or activities being undertaken.

Table 1: Example list of high risk hazards that may occur in laboratories. (Based on NZS/AS 2243.1 -2005)

High risk hazards which could be encountered include the following:
- Operating apparatus capable of inflicting serious injury.
- Handling venomous reptiles, insects, arthropods or fish.
- Working with, or near, toxic or corrosive substances where there is a significant risk of exposure to the substance, taking into account the volume used.
- Using apparatus that could result in explosion, implosion, or the release of high energy fragments or significant amounts of toxic or environmentally damaging hazardous material.
- Working with exposed energized electrical or electronic systems with nominal voltages exceeding 50 V AC or 120 V ripple-free DC. NOTE: These limits are for dry, indoor conditions and a more conservative approach should be taken in other conditions.
- Working with radio nuclides requiring a high level laboratory in accordance with National Radiation Laboratory Code of safe practice for the use of unsealed radioactive materials, NRL C1.
- Working with microorganisms of Risk Group 3 and higher, or which require the use of containment level 3 facility or higher.
- Other general laboratory process as relevant

Table 2: Example list of high risk hazards that may occur in non laboratory activities.

Examples of high risk hazards which could be encountered are:
- Operating equipment or machinery, including workshop machinery, capable of inflicting serious injury, such as chainsaws, firearms, lathes and power saws.
- One on one interview with people where there is a high probability of violent behaviour.
- Work involving climbing towers or high ladders.
- Operating pyrotechnics – other than for emergency use.
- Working in environments not at atmospheric pressure.
- Aerobatic use of aircraft.
- Working with large animals other than for the purpose of feeding or observation.
- Operating equipment which could explode, implode, or release of high energy fragments or significant amounts of toxic or environmentally damaging hazardous material.
- Working with live mains electricity.
- Working near or in active natural hazards.
- Experimental extreme sports or experiences.
- Exhaustive fitness testing.
- Individual or student led research or field work in high risk activity.
- Working in oxygen reduced environments, or contaminated atmosphere.
- Working in enclosed spaces.
- Work in countries with high risk ISOS classification.
- Environments with extreme temperatures.
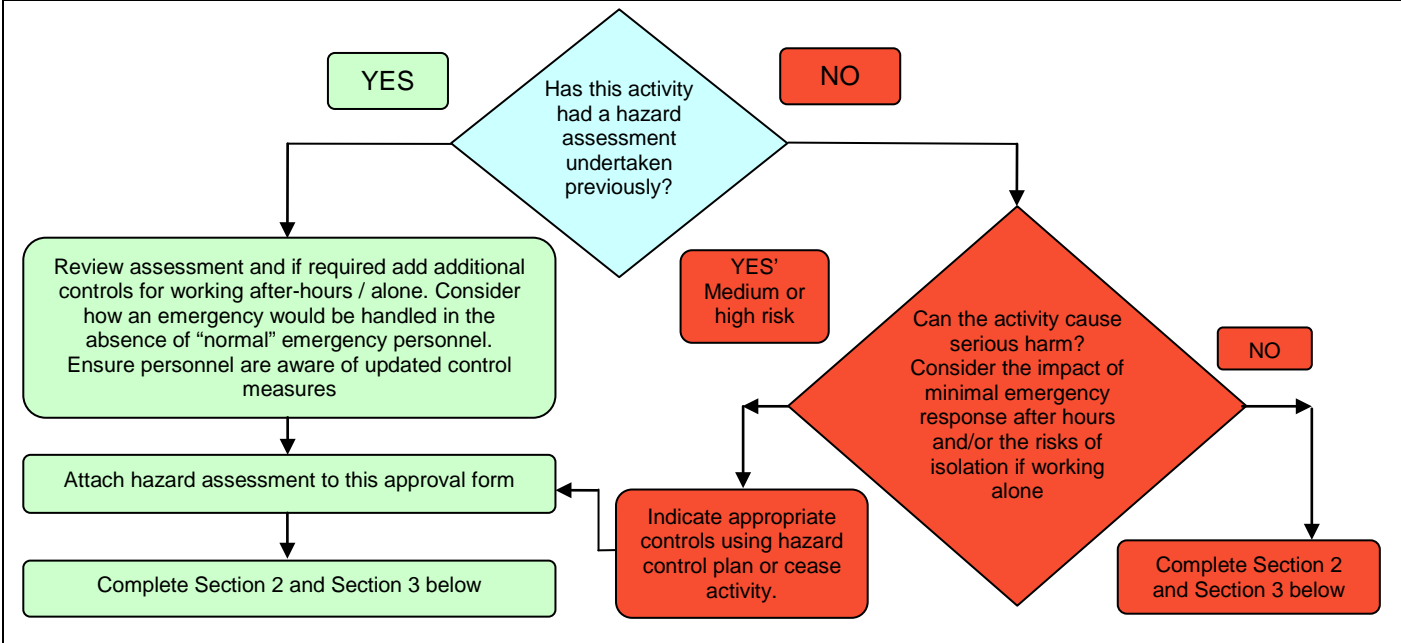- Lone work on large expanses of water.

DEPARTMENT:

APPROVAL FOR WORKING AFTER-HOURS OR ALONE
To be used for moderate or high risk activities

Name(s):		Title /Group:	
Activity:			
Time Restrictions:			
Location:			

SECTION 1	**HAZARD ASSESSMENT -** Supervisor / Manager in control of work area to complete:

YES

Has this activity had a hazard assessment undertaken previously?

NO

Review assessment and if required add additional controls for working after-hours / alone. Consider how an emergency would be handled in the absence of "normal" emergency personnel. Ensure personnel are aware of updated control measures

YES' Medium or high risk

Can the activity cause serious harm? Consider the impact of minimal emergency response after hours and/or the risks of isolation if working alone

NO

Attach hazard assessment to this approval form

Indicate appropriate controls using hazard control plan or cease activity.

Complete Section 2 and Section 3 below

Complete Section 2 and Section 3 below

SECTION 2	**COMMUNICATION PLAN**		
Routine Checks By:		Frequency:	
Method:	Visual ☐ Phone ☐ Other:		
Contact Phone Numbers:	A/H Worker:	Checker:	
Emergency Actions & Contact Numbers:			

SECTION 3	**SIGN OFF**
Person working after-hours / alone	Lab Manager / Supervisor approval
The risks determined by the hazard assessment are adequately controlled and I will ensure all hazard control measures are implemented and after-hours registers are filled in. I also understand the emergency procedures for this activity.	The hazards associated with this after-hours / alone work have been adequately addressed and I believe it safe for this work to be undertaken in this manner.
Signed: Date:	Signed: Date:

DISEMMINATION

- Those working after hours and those checking must have a copy of this approval.
- Block approvals may also be posted in the work area,
- Copy to file for future

GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL SAFETY WHEN WORKING AFTER-HOURS

University facilities used after-hours may hold items of value or be attractive to others, who may gain forced entry or wait for a staff member to arrive with keys or access codes. Examples of items which are attractive include: cash, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, apparatus, machinery, artwork, valuables, AV and computing equipment, research material, intellectual property. The attraction may be to gain an item for alternative use, or ideological such as disrupting a process that is not agreed with.

When staff or students are working after-hours, it is preferable to have at least two staff or students working together if possible.

Security needs to be informed when alarms are deactivated after-hours. Security can provide escort for staff to their vehicles when work has finished if they have concerns, or workers should relocate vehicle or transport to facilitate safe exit from the building and vicinity.

Measures to enhance safety for after-hours lone working are:
- Ensuring the building can be adequately secured from the inside.
- Keeping doors locked to prevent casual entry, if appropriate.
- Knowing location of help point locations, or arranging a remote control device, that can be used to activate an audible alarm and alert Security, if safety is threatened.

If you arrive early:
- If you are the first person to arrive at work check for any sign of forced entry.
- Where any signs of force are observed the facility should not be entered, as an intruder could be present. The Police or Security should be called, and any other employees warned when they arrive

If you will be finishing late:
- Park as near to your building as possible in an area that will be well lit at night.
- Consider other transport options if the only parking available is at an isolated location.
- Let someone know you will be working late.
- Check that you are secure inside the building and that no doors or windows have been left open or unlocked.
- When leaving the building check the immediate area outside for any people loitering, before opening the door.
- Use the best lit route to your car and have someone walk with you if possible.

Off campus appointments:
Some activities require meeting clients in their homes or in other isolated situations. If you have this kind of work consider what practices you could adopt to reduce any potential risks to your safety.
- Leave a written record at work of where you are going, the client's name, and the estimated time of your return.
- When visiting a house or other place, be guided by your instincts. If the person opening the door has a manner which makes you feel uneasy or uncomfortable, don't go inside. Make an excuse and leave immediately.

- If you enter a place and later start to feel uncomfortable with the person you are talking to, leave as soon as possible. Be aware of potential escape routes.
- Carrying a mobile telephone will enable you to advise a colleague of your arrival in the presence of the client. Any person posing a potential threat to your safety would be deterred by the fact that others are aware of your location, and identity of the person you are with.
- You can also arrange a distress code word for telephone use which lets your office know if you are in a risk situation.
- When responding to any requests for a meeting, job advertisement, or similar situation, consider the time and place for the proposed appointment.
- If you feel that the situation is potentially unsafe, arrange to take a colleague or buddy with you.

More specific information on interviewer safety in drug and alcohol field work is available on the health and safety website.