

Administrative Procedure 4210

Working Alone or In Isolation

Board Governance Policy Cross Reference: [1, 12, 13](#)

Administrative Procedures Cross Reference:

[Emergency Preparedness](#)

[Workplace Safety and Health](#)

Form Cross Reference:

Working Alone or In Isolation Risk Assessment

Legal/Regulatory Reference:

[Workplace Safety and Health Act](#)

[Workplace Safety and Health Regulation \(Part 9\)](#)

Interlake School Division is committed to ensuring, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees who work alone or in isolation. All previously established forms of communication are to be continued. This procedure applies to all division employees (workers) and is intended to provide an extra layer of safety for employees who work alone or in isolation. The implementation of this procedure will be gradually phased in to allow for: proper training for employees working alone or in isolation, acquisition of the necessary technology (phones), a period of pilot testing, and responsiveness to the differing needs of each employee group and the differing times of the year (i.e. while school is in session versus during the summer months).

Electronic monitoring of employees will not be used to monitor work habits or performance.

Definitions

The working alone procedure shall be used in both working alone and working in isolation scenarios as defined in the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Regulations.

Working alone means the performance of any work function by a worker who:

- a) is the only worker for that employer at that workplace at any time; and,

b) is not directly supervised by the employer, or another person designated as a supervisor by the employer, at any time.

Working in isolation means working in circumstances where assistance is not readily available in the event of injury, ill health or emergency.

Workplace means any building, site, workshop, structure, mobile vehicle, or any other premises or location in which one or more workers are engaged in work.

Worker includes any person employed by the Interlake School Division to perform a service whether for gain or reward or hope of gain or reward or not.

Supervisor means a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.

Responsibilities:

Employer

According to Part 9 of the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Regulations, an employer must develop and implement safe work procedures to eliminate or reduce the identified risks to workers working alone or in isolation. Safe work procedures must have an effective communication system as well as a system of contact by the employer with the worker.

Supervisor

At the beginning of each school year and ongoing as required, supervisors will identify workers who will be working alone or in isolation and will train them on this procedure. Supervisors will complete a working alone risk assessment form for each employee who will be working alone or in isolation and provide a copy of the form to the Safety Advisor. Supervisors will act as safety alert contacts when workers miss scheduled check-ins.

Worker

When working alone or in isolation, workers must follow the procedure as outlined below. They are responsible for checking in according to their schedule for the duration of the time they are working alone or in isolation. Workers must never engage in any of the prohibited activities listed below when working alone or in isolation.

Application:

As appropriate training and structures are in place, this procedure will apply to:

- all employees who work alone or in isolation during their regular work hours; and
- all employees who choose to work in divisional buildings outside regular business hours (0600-1800). Employees who choose to work in divisional buildings outside of regular business hours must first pre-arrange their schedule and obtain approval from their supervisor.

Prohibited activities

Working alone is prohibited for the following high-risk activities:

- confined space entry
- working on energized electrical equipment - only completely qualified and trained tradespeople familiar with the work assignment shall be allowed to work on live circuits or equipment.
- power line hazards – use of a vehicle, crane or similar equipment near a live power line where it is possible to make contact with the live power line
- view obstruction – use of a vehicle, crane or similar material handling equipment where the operator does not have full view of the intended path of travel
- working at heights where fall arrest equipment is required
- hot work applications where a fire watch is required
- tasks which based on a risk assessment are deemed to require more than one person

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment will be based on the activity that the worker will be performing when working alone or in isolation. Each activity shall be rated as low, medium or high risk. If the work activity changes, the risk assessment form must be resubmitted to the Safety Advisor.

Besides task-related risks, other risks associated with working alone or in isolation may include:

- sudden and severe injury or illness to workers both inside buildings or on school grounds; and/or
- exposure to threats of violence or violent acts perpetrated by the public who may be in schools for community use, or who may be unauthorized intruders who were able to gain access to school buildings.

Procedure:

Following the completion of the Working Alone or In Isolation Risk Assessment form workers shall adhere to the following procedures when working alone.

Workers regularly scheduled to work alone or in isolation shall use the Checkmate Safe Alone App. The frequency of check in will be determined by the worker and their supervisor according to the risk of their job function. In no situation shall the frequency exceed 2 hours. A cell phone will be provided at each school for use by custodial staff when working alone or in isolation. Maintenance department tradespeople can opt to use a divisional cell phone or their personal phone for the Checkmate Safe Alone App.

Workers who choose to stay in or enter a building outside regular business hours (0600-1800) must register their intent at the beginning of the school year and as needed with their supervisor and utilize the Checkmate Safe Alone App on their personal device. Employees who choose to work in divisional buildings outside of regular business hours must first pre-arrange their schedule and obtain approval

from their supervisor. The frequency of check-in will be determined by the worker and their supervisor according to the risk of their job function. In no situation shall the frequency exceed 2 hours.

If a worker not registered with the Checkmate Safe Alone App needs access to a divisional building outside of regular business hours, the employee is responsible for arranging access and monitoring directly with their supervisor. The frequency of check-in will be determined by the worker and their supervisor according to the risk of their job function. In no situation shall the frequency exceed 2 hours.

Checkmate Safe Alone App User Instructions

1. When working alone or in isolation, tap the **Activate** button. An initial check-in will automatically occur and safety checks will be turned on. This will be confirmed by a large checkmark appearing on the screen.
2. On the Safe Alone app a timer countdown, including the time when the next safety check will occur, will be displayed. You can proactively check-in at any time by tapping the **Check-In** button to confirm your safety and reset the timer. Check-in frequency can be edited from this screen (not to exceed 2 hours). At the end of the working alone period, tap the deactivate button to end the monitoring period.
3. Settings in the Safe Alone app must be set to provide lone worker check-in location by either:
 - a. Sending location coordinates when checking in, activating and deactivating; or
 - b. Prompting for text location when checking in, activating and deactivating (location information must be provided when prompted)

Missed Safety Check – Notifications from Checkmate

1. A reminder text is sent to lone worker before their required check-in time– adjustable between 3 to 20 minutes prior.
2. If lone worker fails to check-in, an automated phone call is triggered, prompting them for a check-in response.
3. If the automated call is not responded to, a missed safety check alarm is created:
 - a. Lone worker will be notified via text that an alarm has been created and a live operator will attempt to reach the lone worker by phone.
 - b. If contact remains unestablished, the Safety Alert Contact(s) are notified via text that the worker has missed their safety check and to acknowledge that they will investigate. Safety Alert Contact notifications are staggered at predetermined intervals.
 - c. If there is no acknowledgment from the Safety Alert Contacts, the live operator will attempt to reach the Safety Alert Contacts by phone as well as attempt to reach the lone worker again, leaving messages where available.
 - d. If no responses are received, an email notification is sent to the Account Administrator and no further action will be taken from the monitoring centre.

Upon receiving notification of a failed check-in alert from Checkmate, the Safety Alert Contact will do the following:

1. Call the worker cell phone.
2. Text the worker cell phone and wait 5 minutes for response.
3. Confirm with the alternate designated Safety Alert Contacts to determine if they have had contact.

If there is still no response from the lone worker, the Safety Alert Contact will:

1. Call the last known location for further information.
2. If necessary, and applicable, obtain the location of the assigned divisional vehicle to assist in establishing the location of the lone worker.
3. If contact still cannot be established with the lone worker, the Safety Alert Contact is to contact the Supervisor to determine next steps which could include contacting 911 and reporting that contact cannot be made with the employee who has missed their check-in, that there have been multiple attempts to reach them and advise them of their last known location.