

Lone Working & Out of Hours Working Health and Safety Policy

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This Health and Safety Policy establishes the framework for the health & safety measures to be adopted and implemented by Queen Mary University of London (Queen Mary) staff and students when managing the potential risks arising from lone working or out of hours working.

1.2 The Policy defines lone working and out of hours working in the context of Queen Mary's activities, identifies the key roles and responsibilities for a variety of stakeholders, and notes the key legal and compliance requirements (including certain prohibitions) specified in health and safety legislation and guidance.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Activities involving lone working and out of hours working should always be given additional consideration as lone workers can be more vulnerable due to working without direct supervision and not having anyone readily available to help and assist them if things go wrong. Therefore, it is imperative to consider any health and safety risks associated with tasks and activities undertaken by lone workers or individuals working out of hours so that suitable control measures can be put in place prior to the work being carried out.

2.2 Risks that particularly affect lone workers include:

- violence in the workplace - lone working does not always mean a higher risk of violence, but it does make workers more vulnerable. The lack of nearby support makes it harder for them to prevent an incident or to obtain support should they require it.
- stress and mental health or wellbeing – in some cases, lone working can cause work-related stress and affect people's mental health. It is important not to underestimate the value of relationships with, and support from, other workers. Being away from managers and colleagues could make it difficult to get the required support.
- a person's medical suitability to work alone - if you are unsure whether someone's health condition means they are safe to work alone, you should seek medical advice from [occupational health](#). Consider both routine work and possible emergencies that may put additional physical and mental burdens on the lone worker.
- the workplace itself – an individual's work may require them to work at multiple locations. This could be somewhere they are routinely based or could be completely new and unfamiliar, such as undertaking research in remote or isolated areas. Location factors should therefore be considered prior to the work being undertaken so the required risk controls can be implemented.

2.3 It is also important to note that you have the same health and safety responsibilities for homeworkers and the same liability for accident or injury as for any other workers. This means you must provide supervision, education and training, as well as implementing enough control measures to protect the homeworker. Further information on lone working from home is outlined in section 8.6.

3.0 Purpose

3.1 The objective of the Policy is to set the standards for staff, students and others at Queen Mary who may undertake lone working or work outside of normal hours and, where possible, seek to eliminate or reduce the arising risks to a negligible level.

4.0 Scope

4.1 This Policy applies to all Queen Mary staff, students and others (e.g. contractors, visitors) who may be affected by Queen Mary activities when on Queen Mary Premises. It also applies to Queen Mary staff or students when working from home and should be read in conjunction with the [Queen Mary Hybrid Working Policy](#).

4.2 For guidance on the control and reduction of risks when working alone / out of hours on Queen Mary business but not on Queen Mary Premises, please refer to the Queen Mary [Working Off-site](#) guidance and the [Queen Mary Hybrid Working Policy](#).

5.0 Legislation

5.1 General duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act etc 1974 (Section 2) and specific duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Regulation 3) require a formal assessment of any significant risks involved when a person is required, or wants, to work alone (this maybe within normal working hours or out of hours).

5.2 Certain work activities identified in health and safety guidance accompanying the above legislation are prohibited from being carried out by a person working alone. These are contextualised within section 8.2.1 of this Policy in terms of typical Queen Mary activities.

6.0 Terms and Definitions

6.1 Lone Worker:

6.1.1 For the purpose of this Policy, a person who has neither visual nor audible communication with someone (physically) who can summon assistance in the event of an accident, illness or other adverse event is considered to be a 'lone worker'.

6.2 Normal Working Hours and 'Out of Hours' Worker:

6.2.1 Queen Mary views 8am to 6pm on normal working weekdays as 'normal working hours', where the full complement of health and safety related assistance (e.g., first aid, fire marshals, security, health and safety advice) can be provided to staff, students and others. Outside of these hours, the capacity for Queen Mary to provide health and safety assistance will be markedly reduced. Persons working outside the 'normal working hours' on Queen Mary premises will be considered to be working 'out of hours'.

6.2.2 If Schools / Institutes / Directorates (S/I/Ds) wish to extend the 'normal working hours' beyond the above noted times, they must ensure sufficient health and safety related assistance is procured and provided. The needs must be determined by a robust risk assessment. Consideration should be given to the reduced security, first aid and fire marshal provision in these instances.

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 **Heads of Schools / Directors** are responsible for:

- Ensuring systems and processes are in place to enable the sufficient planning, implementing, monitoring and regular reviewing of procedures and arrangements to eliminate, control or reduce risks associated with lone / out of hours working.
- Ensuring the local lone working / out of hours arrangements are clearly and explicitly communicated to staff, students and others who may be affected e.g., visitors, contractors.

**Accountability cannot be delegated, although tasks associated with a particular responsibility can be delegated to a competent person.*

7.2 The Estates and Facilities (EAF) Directorate is responsible for:

- Providing up-to-date information on local security arrangements to Heads or Directors of S//Ds.
- Working with Heads / Directors and Managers of S//Ds to control access to buildings / areas under their control or remit, both during and outside normal working hours.
- Assisting the Heads or Directors of S//Ds in assessing the access control requirements and implementing suitable control measures for out of hours working.
- Granting staff and students access to buildings and areas as authorised by the relevant Head or Director of S//Ds.
- Granting contractors / visitors access to agreed places and for agreed periods as authorised on the relevant Queen Mary authorisation (permit-to-work, safe to work or time dependant method statement / risk assessment), except when a building or segregated parts of a building have been fully handed over to a contractor (e.g., during refurbishment).
- Informing Heads or Directors of S//Ds of instances of non-compliance recorded by Security Officers or other EAF Officers on the next working day or at the earliest opportunity.

7.3 The Lone / Out of Hours Worker (staff / student or other) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that they have obtained prior permission for lone / out of hours working from their line manager / supervisor or host*, and if significant risks are involved, their S//D Head / Director.
- Informing their line manager / supervisor and Head / Director if they have a health condition or disability that may increase risk from lone / out of hours working.
- Following any control measures identified as part of the risk assessment or local safe operating procedures (SOP).
- Ensuring that they are familiar with the local arrangements for fire, first aid, spillages, power failures and other foreseeable emergencies associated with the activities they will be undertaking.
- Adhering to agreed protocols for emergency contact, such as:
 - Providing a contact number to their line manager / supervisor.
 - Informing their line manager / supervisor, or lone working 'buddy' the time that they expect to leave the premises.
 - Filling out the building entry logbook or electronic system on starting work outside normal hours and upon leaving the building, where such a logbook or electronic system exists.
 - Informing their line manager immediately if there are any problems or changes to agreed arrangements.
 - Keeping within the scope of the agreed work and work areas.
 - Ensuring accidents / incidents are reported on MySafety.

**If an individual instructs or issues tasks to another individual or group of individuals, then whether a designated line manager or not, they become responsible for the health, safety and well-being of those they have instructed.*

8.0 Policy / Operational Arrangements

8.1 Each School / Institute / Directorate should identify all lone workers within their departments and consider times when people may be working out of normal working hours. There will be a variety of lone workers and some examples may include individuals who are:

- working outside normal hours, e.g., cleaners, security etc.
- working alone in a premises, e.g., staff and students working early or late, maintenance operatives
- working away from Queen Mary sites e.g. researchers and fieldworkers
- working in isolation in lab areas, workshops and individual offices
- working in areas where other people are around but they are the only staff member from Queen Mary present and do not have a colleague immediately available to assist e.g., reception areas
- working from home

8.1.1 Once the lone workers have been identified, the information should then be used to assess the associated significant risks with the aim of eliminating or reducing them to a negligible level. Consideration should be given to the:

- tasks and activities being completed and what they entail
- equipment, materials and substances to be used
- location and organisational factors
- individuals involved.

8.2 Tasks and activities

8.2.1 Certain tasks or activities are prohibited when working alone / out of hours:

8.2.1.1 Work in confined spaces - work in confined spaces is strictly prohibited where there may be inadequate ventilation, risk of toxic gas release or where oxygen may be depleted to a dangerous level. Examples include tanks, manholes, pipes, flues, ducts, ceiling voids, enclosed basement rooms, storerooms, dark rooms, cold rooms, and cryogenic liquid storage rooms.

8.2.1.2 Use of unsecured ladders - ladders which cannot be secured must always be footed by a second person when in use. Although some working at height may be acceptable to be undertaken by lone workers in the right circumstances, all working at height should be thoroughly planned to ensure all operatives are competent and the equipment is appropriate for the task.

8.2.1.3 Erecting or dismantling scaffold

8.2.1.4 Use of dangerous machinery without adequate training / competence:

- Dangerous machinery includes woodworking machines, dough mixers, meat mincing machines, metal milling machines, guillotine machines, slicing equipment machines used in laboratories (e.g. microtome) or catering (both powered and manual), hydraulic and pneumatic power presses, potato chipping machines, food mixing machines when used with attachments for mincing, slicing, chipping or any other cutting operations or for crumbing, high speed centrifuges, high speed homogenisers and liquidisers.
- Persons are prohibited from working alone at the machines listed above unless they have received sufficient training to use the machines and they are deemed competent to operate them.
- Sufficient training, in the context of these machines, must include an appropriate period of instruction on the hazards associated with them, and the measures required to minimise the risks. The correct use of guards, safety devices and protective

clothing where appropriate must be demonstrated. Operators must be shown how to access and use emergency stops on the machines. The operator should then be supervised using the machine to assess competency.

- A written record of the training and competency for the task must be kept.

8.2.1.5 Work on live electrical conductors:

- Persons carrying out work on or near live electrical conductors must be accompanied by another person. The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 give the following examples of electrical work where it is recommended this arrangement should be followed:
 - Electrical work involving manipulation of live, un-insulated power conductors at above 240 volts using insulated tools.
 - Other work on or near bare live conductors where a person working alone would not be capable of undertaking the work safely without assistance in, for example, keeping other persons from the work area.

8.2.1.6 Work involving unpredictable behaviour from clients / customers / subjects:

- This work should be avoided in situations where immediate assistance may be needed e.g., social science / psychiatric interviews with highly unpredictable / violent / aggressive persons.

8.2.1.7 Diving operations e.g., underwater research activities.

8.2.1.8 Fumigation work e.g., non-remote fumigation of a Containment Level 3 laboratory with formaldehyde or accessing plant area where fumigant may be released.

8.2.1.9 Work by young persons – persons under 18 years of age must not work alone on Queen Mary premises.

8.2.1.10 The above is not exhaustive as there may be other tasks or activities identified within a School / Institute / Directorate which are deemed as inappropriate for workers to undertake alone or out of hours. Where this is the case, appropriate actions should be taken, and controls implemented. All staff should be made fully aware that the work is not to be undertaken alone, and measures should be in place to monitor and ensure this instruction is followed.

8.3 Equipment, materials and substances

8.3.1 Handling and use of plant and equipment:

- Where plant / equipment is heavy, awkward, unstable or large, more than one person may be necessary to operate essential controls to allow the safe running of equipment.

8.3.2 Handling and use of substances and materials

- The handling of hazardous substances and materials must be considered carefully, particularly where they are subject to any of the following:
 - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations
 - Dangerous Substances and Explosives Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)
 - Ionising Radiation Regulations
- Substances that have, for example, the potential to cause severe acute injury, either alone or as a component of a reaction, to cause burns, or to affect the respiratory,

cardiovascular, or central nervous system must be assessed and measures taken to eliminate or reduce the risk to negligible levels. Some examples include:

- Working with or the handling of pathogenic / hazardous biological / clinical samples within a cryogenic liquid store. This should be conducted as a two-person operation, and out of hours working avoided (see 8.2.1 for specific restrictions for 'confined spaces')
- Working with Hazard Group 3 pathogens– recommendation is that unless the task necessitates work at a particular time (e.g. processing of samples received on Saturday morning) and the worker is trained, competent and robust emergency procedures are in place, lone working and out of hours working should be avoided.
- Experiments with highly toxic, explosive and extremely flammable substances - recommendation is that unless the task necessitates work at a particular time (e.g. time course dependant experiment) and the worker is trained, competent and robust emergency procedures are in place, lone working and out of hours working should be avoided.
- In many cases, the effective assessment for health and safety would be to conduct the work during normal working hours, with adequate supervision by the responsible person and with all applicable health and safety assistance available. Particular consideration in the assessment must be made for those who are new to the work (new staff / postgraduates or those conducting cross-disciplinary work) or are trainees.
- Activities involving hazardous substances and/or hazardous biological agents will need a risk assessment to be completed prior to the activity being undertaken. This assessment should consider the potential for lone working to occur and outline whether it is acceptable or not based on the associated risks. For more information, please refer to the [risk assessment page](#) on the HSD website.

8.3.3 Handling of cash / valuables

- Consideration should be given to whether there will be a significant risk of violence / aggression against the lone worker handling valuables e.g., cash, filming equipment, monitoring equipment.

8.4 Location and organisation factors

8.4.1 Consideration should be given to where the work will be undertaken as well as ensuring safe access and egress. Whilst staff working on campus may be familiar with their surroundings, there may be times when they are working on non-Queen Mary premises. Where Queen Mary staff and students are expected to comply with another organisation's local arrangements, including lone / out of hours working, it is imperative they are aware of, and adhere to, the procedures.

8.5 Individuals involved in the lone / out of hours work

8.5.1 Fitness to lone work:

- Consider whether there are any reasons the individual might be more vulnerable than others and be particularly at risk if they work alone e.g. pregnant, disabled.
- Routine work and non-routine or reasonably foreseeable emergencies should both be considered when assessing whether a person is medically fit to work alone. Emergencies may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual and in some cases it will be necessary to develop and implement a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP).

8.5.2 Assessing the competency of the individual:

- The competency of the individual undertaking the task is particularly important where there is limited supervision. An assessment of their competence should be made based on their training, knowledge and experience of the task they are undertaking, the equipment, material or substances they are using and the location(s) they are working in. The individual must be fully aware of the risks involved in the work and the necessary precautions, especially where it may be critical to avoid panic response in unusual situations. Consideration should also be given to the information and instructions they have been given for the activity they are undertaking.
- Although lone / out of hours workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, Queen Mary has a duty to provide appropriate control of the work. The extent of supervision required will depend upon the risks involved and the competency and experience of the person carrying out the work. In some cases, there may be a need to issue lone workers with lone worker safety devices or smartphone apps which can include features such as GPS monitoring, panic buttons, and two-way communication. Robust response procedures must be agreed, understood and enacted by all parties should an alert be raised by the lone worker, or their identified 'buddy' is unable to contact them at the agreed time.
- Persons new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job that presents high level of risks, or dealing with new situations must not work alone / out of hours until their supervision needs are assessed. The extent of supervision required is a line management decision and it should not be left to individuals to decide when they require assistance.
- If the lone worker's first language is not English, consideration should be given to whether there are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communication, especially in emergencies.
- Appropriate support must be available to workers who may work alone to ensure they have means of calling for assistance, raising concerns or as a means of maintaining their mental wellbeing. S/I/Ds need to ensure that their staff and students are fully aware of the support available and how to access it.

8.6 Lone Working from home

8.6.1 Consideration should be given to any staff, student and others who undertake work on behalf Queen Mary remotely / from home taking the following factors into account:

- How you will maintain contact with home workers.
- The tasks and activities home workers will be undertaking.
- The time spent completing the activities.
- Any risks associated with the work tasks.
- Any control measures that need to be implemented.

8.6.2 Home workers can become isolated which could lead to them suffering from stress and anxiety. It is therefore essential to ensure you remain in regular contact which will also help ensure that any issues or problems are picked up on sooner rather than later. It is important for staff to know that they can raise issues and are aware of the process for doing so. The frequency of check ins will be determined by the level of risks involved in an individuals' work, the greater the risk, the more regular check ins will be required. When developing local processes for lone workers within your teams, you should engage with the lone workers to

ensure the arrangements suit the requirements of the team but also to ensure that everyone is clear on the procedures and know how to raise concerns.

8.6.3 The majority of home workers at Queen Mary will undertake office-based and administrative activities. Therefore, the main risks associated with this will include poor posture, eye strain and fatigue. Staff should work in accordance with the guidance provided in the [online Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\) Workstation Assessment](#) module, ensuring they take regular breaks from their screen, ideally getting up and moving around for 5-10 minutes every hour and using risers with a separate keyboard and mouse when working for long periods on laptops. Regular reminders should be given to staff to ensure they remain aware of these control measures. If staff undertake different activities whilst working from home, the hazards will need to be considered and appropriate control measures identified and implemented.

8.6.4 Staff working remotely should also refer to the [Queen Mary Hybrid Working Policy](#).

8.6.5 S/I/Ds should therefore establish clear procedures in line with this Policy, to set limits as to what can and cannot be done and assess competency requirements for higher risk tasks. These procedures should identify when lone / out of hours workers should stop or not conduct the work and when they must seek advice, assistance or permissions. The Health and Safety Directorate (HSD) can provide advice and support on this topic if required.

8.7 Monitoring of Lone Workers

8.7.1 Suitable systems should be devised to monitor the conditions of lone / out of hours workers and should include periodic checks (e.g. during and/or at the end of the lone working / out of hours working period).

8.7.2 In addition, it may be necessary to consider:

- Procedures where a member of supervisory staff periodically visits and visually monitors lone / out of hours workers.
- Procedures where regular contact between the lone / out of hours worker and a member of supervisory staff or Queen Mary Security is maintained (by responsive messages – e.g. email, telephone, texts or twitter messages or by responsive visual contact media (e.g. skype, FaceTime) or by Security patrol checks (physical or audible/visual responsive methods).
- Automatic warning devices which raise the alarm in an emergency and are activated by the absence of activity or deviation from normal activity from the lone / out of hours worker (e.g. personal alarms / lone worker safety devices with connection to a suitable monitoring system / person).
- Suitable "signing in & out" reporting systems for Campus / Buildings. It is recommended to consider reporting systems that link into Queen Mary Security to obtain 'first responder' assistance.

8.7.3 It is important to note that where there is a requirement for a lone worker to check in with a buddy / colleague at an agreed frequency, response procedures must be established, and both the lone worker and the buddy need to be fully aware of what action(s) will be taken in this event. The buddy must ensure this procedure is followed if no contact is made by the lone worker. It is also imperative to periodically test any identified response procedures to ensure that they work and remain effective. It is recommended any tests are recorded.

8.7.4 Liaison and establishment of effective lone / out of hours working procedures with contractors / service engineers is the responsibility of the EAF Directorate (when they are contracted by EAF) or the contracting S/I/Ds.

8.7.5 Queen Mary staff in embedded space (e.g. in Barts Health Trust Premises) must follow the emergency procedures identified by the host organisation.

8.8 Reporting Incidents

8.8.1 All Queen Mary staff, students, visitors and contractors working alone / out of hours must know how to report an accident, incident or significant near miss according to the Queen Mary Policy: <http://www.hsd.qmul.ac.uk/accident-reporting/>.

8.8.2 Any incidents reported should be investigated accordingly and any remedial actions identified should be acted upon to prevent future occurrences. For more significant incidents, HSD may provide support with a local investigation or may even undertake a more thorough investigation. More information is provided on the [Accident and Incident Reporting](#) webpage.

9.0 Further Information

9.1 Queen Mary HSD [Lone Working](#) webpage

9.2 Queen Mary HSD [Risk Assessment](#) webpage

9.3 Queen Mary HSD [Off-site working](#) webpage

9.4 [HSE Guidance note](#) (INDG73) for protecting lone workers

9.5 The [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#) website provides lots of guidance around personal safety.

Document Control

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