

| Standard Operating Procedure<br><b>Working Alone Safely</b> |                   |                 |                         |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| SOP Number:   | <u>SOP-WAS-01</u> | Category:       | <u>Administrative</u>   |
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| Subject: <b>Working Alone Safely</b>                        |                   |                 |                         |

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## 1.0 POLICY

Users of the W.J. Henderson Centre for Patient Oriented Research (WJHCPOR) **MUST** follow safety procedures anytime they are working alone or in isolation. Kingston General Health Research Institute (KGHRI) will take every reasonable precaution to ensure the protection of all users of the WJHCPOR by focusing on health and safety efforts to eliminate and/or reduce known or foreseen threats to the users of the WJHCPOR through the implementation of hazard assessment measures.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

To ensure that appropriate supervisory due diligence and to promote safe work procedures for the health and safety of all users of the WJHCPOR working alone. Users of the WJHCPOR and their direct supervisors **MUST** work together to develop safety plans when users will be working alone or in isolation. KGHRI requires a buddy system, a check-in procedure, and an effective means of communication is in place for all users of the WJHCPOR with their direct supervisors when working alone. KGHRI encourages that there always be a minimum of two users on site within the WJHCPOR when conducting research activities involving research participants. Normal business hours at the WJHCPOR are between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. weekdays (Monday through Friday). After hours include the times between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. weekdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and statutory holidays. During after hours, the WJHCPOR requires users to swipe into the secure area with their hospital ID badges. KGHRI staff members are on site during normal business hours only for assistance. Security cameras are strategically placed throughout the WJHCPOR for users' safety. Three intercom systems are located in the WJHCPOR: in the Clinical Investigation Unit (Room 2-4-021-0) and along the east and west hallway corridors. Users of the WJHCPOR can communicate using the intercoms with research participants and visitors after hours when the doorbell is ringing at the main entrance. This allows users to decide if they want to use the "unlock" button to let them into the WJHCPOR after hours. Additionally, the computer workstations in the Clinical Investigation Unit allow users to visually see who is at the main entrance door.

### 3.0 DEFINITIONS

**Accident** - an incident that results in personal injury or property damage.

**Activity** - means a set of tasks, situation, condition, or process that is conducted by a user.

**Buddy System** - a system of organizing users into work groups so that each user of the work group is designated to be observed by at least one other user in the work group.

**Check in Procedure** - an established procedure of communication between a user and a designated individual with the goal of accounting for the user working alone. Medium and high risk activities will require that a check-in procedure be established when working alone or in isolation.

**Critical Injury** - an injury of a serious nature that places life in jeopardy, produces unconsciousness, results in substantial loss of blood, involves fractures or amputations, involves burns to major portions of the body or the loss of sight.

**Effective Means of Communication** - a radio, telephone, or other electronic communication device.

**Hazard** - a danger or risk that has the capability of producing adverse effects to the health, well-being and safety of an individual.

**Hazard Assessment** - a procedure, which helps integrate required Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) Occupational Health & Safety and Queen's University (Queen's) Environmental Health & Safety principles and practices into a particular work task. Each basic step of the task is examined to identify potential hazards and required control measures to determine the safest way to do the work.

**Incident** - an unplanned event.

**Safety Plan** - a documented plan of safe work practices with a goal to prevent incidents, accidents, and critical injuries and to minimize risk.

**Supervisor** – a person that directs or oversees a user, user group, user department, user organization, or user operation for KHSC and/or Queen's.

**User** – a researcher, student, trainee, KHSC employee, Queen's employee, agent, contractor, or a person in an unpaid position who is performing/carrying out research activities under the direct supervision of a KHSC employee and/or Queen's employee/Faculty member.

**Working Alone** - when a person works in isolation or in a remote location (referred to as isolated or remote work) for a period of time and they do not have direct contact with another user or co-worker or a supervisor and in the event of injury, illness or emergency, immediate assistance is not readily available.

## 4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Users are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they work safely as to not endanger themselves or research participants when working alone.
- Ensuring that they notify their direct supervisor **immediately** if they are uncomfortable with any aspect of their work activities when working alone. If uncomfortable, users should stop these work activities and not continue until the issue is resolved with their direct supervisor.
- Ensuring that they have in place with their direct supervisor a safety plan when working alone or in isolation.
- Ensuring that they have in place with their direct supervisor a buddy system, a check-in procedure, and an effective means of communication when working alone. Users should notify KHSC (KGH campus) Protection Services at extension 4142 when they are working alone in the WJHCPOR. KHSC (KGH campus) Protection Services will complete rounds to check-in on users working alone. A code word can be set up with KHSC (KGH campus) Protection Services and/or your buddy system to be used to identify or confirm that help is needed.
- Seeking medical attention for all incidents, accidents, and critical injuries. See “Accidental Occupational Exposure and Reporting Workplace Incidents” SOP. If needed, activate a hospital code (i.e. CODE 99 (Medical Emergency)) by calling KHSC (KGH campus) extension 4444 to speak with a switchboard operator. See “Calling Codes” SOP.
- Reporting all incidents, accidents, and critical injuries **immediately** to their direct supervisor, the appropriate institutional occupational health, safety and wellness department, and designated KGHRI staff member. See “Accidental Occupational Exposure and Reporting Workplace Incidents” SOP.

Users’ Supervisors are responsible for:

- Conducting a hazard assessment and to determine the risk level of the work activities for their user of the WJHCPOR when working alone. Users should avoid conducting high risk work activities when working alone. A sample hazard assessment and control plan can be found in Appendix A. The assessment should include:
  - the location of the work activities;
  - the nature of the work activities being done;
  - the potential risks to the user who may be working alone. Potential risks may include the physical work environment or tasks performed as part of the work activities;
  - an assessment of the degree of risk;

- the controls in place to reduce the risk. Controls include emergency response (where and how the user can summon assistance if they are in danger or in the event that they have sustained an injury or illness), buddy system, check in procedure, and an effective means of communication.
- Advising their user of the WJHCPOR the existence of any potential or actual hazards to the health or safety of the user when working alone, which the supervisor is aware.
- Providing their user of the WJHCPOR with written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for protection when working alone.
- Documenting when working alone is permitted and or prohibited and ensuring this is effectively communicated to their user.
- Ensuring that they have in place with their user a safety plan when working alone or in isolation. A sample safety plan can be found in Appendix B.
- Ensuring that they have in place with their user a buddy system, a check-in procedure (generally no longer than 2 hours apart), and an effective means of communication (access to landlines or cell phones) when working alone.
- Ensuring that their user reports all incidents, accidents, and critical injuries **immediately** to the appropriate institutional occupational health, safety and wellness department and the designated KGHRI staff member.

KGHRI is responsible for:

- Providing orientation and training to users of the WJHCPOR regarding working alone.
- Ensuring emergency contact phone numbers are readily visible and accessible.
- Carrying out the assessment of all spaces with the WJHCPOR to ensure that all known or foreseen hazards to users of the WJHCPOR are identified.
- Taking corrective actions to prevent recurrence of workplace exposure of hazards and injuries/illnesses experienced by users of WJHCPOR. Corrective actions must be done **immediately** if risk/severity is high to users of WJHCPOR.
- Ensuring that all users of WJHCPOR have reported all incidents, accidents, and critical injuries to their direct supervisor and the appropriate institutional occupational health, safety and wellness department. See “Accidental Occupational Exposure and Reporting Workplace Incidents” SOP.
- Ensuring that all security measures (security cameras, locked doors (swipe access only after-hours, etc.) in place are properly functioning for users of the WJHCPOR.
- Ensuring all communication systems (phone lines) are readily available and properly functioning throughout the WJHCPOR for users to access for check in procedures and/or reporting incidents, accidents, critical injuries and/or other emergencies.

## 6.0 CONTACTS

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## 7.0 REFERENCES

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA), R.S.O. 1990
- OSACH (2006). Fast Facts: Protecting Workers Who Work Alone.

## 8.0 SOP HISTORY

| SOP Number | Date Issued | Summary of Revisions |
|------------|-------------|----------------------|
| SOP-WAS-01 | 01-DEC-2017 | Original version.    |
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