

# Biological Sciences Lone Worker Protocol

## Introduction

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. The trained on-site emergency response personnel may be unavailable. This may include: building and floor wardens for building evacuation, first aid trained staff, technical staff such as Laboratory Managers and the campus medical centre. Therefore, it is the objective of this protocol to ensure that when working outside the core working hours, or when working alone in high risk areas during core working hours, that compliance is maintained and achieved for all the Health & Safety, statutory and University regulations we work under, while at the same time providing an open and safe environment that contributes towards meeting the teaching and research objectives of the University.

## Definitions

**After-hours** is defined as usually any time between the hours of 6:00pm – 7:00am, Monday to Friday, all Saturday, Sunday, statutory holidays, and University holidays. This definition may be varied in employment agreements with staff. This implies that core working hours are between 7:00am – 6:00pm, Monday to Friday.

**Working alone** is defined as a situation where normal supervision or support is not readily available. Academic Supervisors/Managers/Laboratory Managers/Senior Technicians must be aware of when their workers or students are working after-hours, at night or alone, and ensure regular and ongoing after-hours work is monitored to ensure it is reasonable, justified and not likely to cause ill-health.

**Contact Person** is defined as the person who has been asked by the staff member/worker or student to be the point of contact when they are working alone in Biological Sciences buildings after-hours. They need to be based outside of the School's buildings (i.e. they are not working elsewhere in the Biological Sciences buildings when you are working in the building after-hours). For students working in the lab this should be your Supervisor where possible.

**Significant Time** is defined as being longer than one hour and relates to staff and students working in their offices after-hours.

**High Risk Hazardous Area** is defined as laboratories, workshops, aquarium, dangerous goods stores and controlled temperature rooms.

## Responsibilities

1. Where possible do not work alone after-hours or in high risk hazardous areas. Always try and have someone else working alongside you when working in high risk hazardous areas.
2. If you need to be in Biological Sciences after-hours on your own then you need to have arranged for a contact person.
  - It is essential that your contact person knows where and when you will be working in the School's building whether it's in the labs or offices. For students this should be your supervisor. Even if your supervisor can't be your contact person, your supervisor needs to be aware of when you are working in the lab after-hours. It is also important that you have informed the floor manager responsible for the lab that you are intending to be working in, alone after-hours.
  - The contact person must be informed of when you arrive and when you expect to leave from the School's buildings.

- You must inform your contact person that you have left the School's building. If the initial estimate of the time you need to be working alone changes while you are working then you must inform your contact person before the original departure time occurs and inform them what the new departure time will be.
  - If you don't contact at the prearranged departure time, the contact person **must** follow up immediately to find out where you are.
3. You must read the University of Canterbury (UC) "Lone Worker" policy, Appendix 1, when available, before working alone for the first time. Note that this applies to everyone – students, support staff and academic staff.
  4. Before you arrive to do any after-hours work, especially in high risk hazardous areas, make sure your supervisor or line manager knows what, when & where you are working and that s/he has approved the work that you will be doing. You and your supervisor or your line manager will need to have completed a hazard risk assessment of the work you will be undertaking after-hours before that work commences, Appendix 2.
  5. If your contact person hasn't heard from you and they can't contact you after the prearranged departure time, they must contact UC Security (0800 823 637) immediately and let them know there is a problem. They must inform security of the name of the building, the floor and the room number where the person they are looking after is working. It is better that we have an embarrassed student/worker with a flat battery on their phone than an unconscious student/worker that no-one knows about.
  6. If you are working after-hours in your office for a significant time you still need to have read the University's "Lone Worker" policy, Appendix 1 and arrange to have a contact person outside the university even though these areas are deemed low risk. You must ensure your contact person is familiar with their responsibilities as stated above. This is especially important if the contact person has no direct association with the university other than via you.
  7. In the event of an emergency in the building you are working in you may need to evacuate. You may need to be the acting floor and/or building warden. Please ensure you are familiar with the School's and University's procedures of what to do in an emergency. This information is situated throughout the School's building and on the following UC website.  
<http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/support/emergency//>
  8. Only postgraduate students and staff are permitted to be working after-hours or alone in the School's buildings.

## Document Information

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