

**LOCAL JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE  
DEPARTMENT OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**1. WORKING ALONE AFTER-HOURS - PERSONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**Effective Date:** September 17, 2003

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**Purpose:** To address concerns related to working alone or after-hours in a **Research Laboratory**.

**Approvals Required:** Faculty Supervisor, Local JHSC, EHS

**2. DEFINITIONS:**

*After Hours:* Hours outside of normal working hours for faculty and staff.

Official university hours are 8:30AM to 4:45PM. Due to variable work schedules/flexible hours, there may be staff members in laboratories between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM.

*Working Alone:* Those work situations where an employee is not directly supervised and in the event of critical injury, health impairment, victimization, or other foreseeable life-threatening emergency, assistance is not readily available.

**3. REQUIREMENTS:**

Fulfills OHSA, R. S. O. 1990, Section 25(2)(h); Ontario Regulations 851, R.R.O. 1990, Industrial Establishments; University of Guelph Safety Policy 851.06.06.

**4. HAZARDS OF THE TASK:**

If an accident, injury or illness should occur while you are alone it may be more difficult for you to get help. Extra vigilance on the part of the employee is required in order to ensure personal safety after-hours, or when working alone.

**5. DESCRIPTION OF THE TASK**

- If you must work in the laboratory by yourself after-hours, make sure that someone knows your location and phone number (lab and/or cell phone).

All rules of **Laboratory Safety, Etiquette, Standard Operating Procedures and Protocols** are in effect and are in effect as they would be during normal working hours. Appropriate personal protective equipment must be used at all times. Make sure that you are aware of the location of all personal protective and safety equipment such as **Lab Coats, Gloves, Safety Glasses/Visors, Spill Kits, Safety Shower/Eyewash Station, First Aid Kit, Fire Extinguishers, Fire Alarm Station and Fire Emergency Procedures** and familiar with its use.

- Inform your faculty supervisor of your planned activity after hours and obtain permission from him/her. Ensure that you have been assigned the required keys. When entering or leaving the building be aware of your surroundings. Report any breaches of building security to the **University Police, ext. 2000**. Keep the laboratory door locked at all times. To prevent being locked out, carry your key with you whenever you leave the lab.

- Before you plan any after-hours work, you must have received **MANDATORY** lab safety orientation and have current WHMIS training. Ensure that you have read all relevant SOP's related to your work activities, **including this one**, that you have received adequate training in the techniques you are to use, and that you have signed the equipment authorization sheets as documentation of your training.

- Ensure that you will be able to complete your planned activity without supervision or assistance. Do not undertake new procedures for which you are not trained. If you are uncomfortable working alone, please plan to work during normal working hours. Discuss this with your supervisor if work outside of normal hours is a major part of your research project. If you have any medical conditions or disabilities which might restrict your ability to work alone safely, make sure that your supervisor is aware of them before permission is granted.
- If you need an escort to your vehicle or home when you are finished your work, you may contact “Safe Walk” at ext. 53200 or 54845

**6. CONTINGENCY PLAN AND REPORTING:**

- In the event of equipment malfunction, you may shut it off and leave a note for the lab manager or technician in charge, as long as no further damage can occur to the equipment.
- If it is a serious occurrence, which may jeopardize someone else’s work (e.g. a malfunctioning incubator) or may further damage equipment, and you are not sure of the course of action, contact the staff member responsible for this equipment, the lab manager, or your faculty supervisor by telephone. Home phone numbers are posted by the lab telephone. By requesting permission to work alone, you are responsible for ensuring that problems which you are unable to handle yourself are reported to someone in authority.
- In case of personal injury, please obtain first aid as required and report the incident by telephone or email to the lab manager or your faculty supervisor within 24-hours.

**7. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY:**

- Shut off equipment if possible.
- If you need medical attention or other assistance and you are not in immediate personal danger, call the University emergency number, posted on each telephone (**ext. 2000 or 52000**). State your location and the nature of the emergency.
- Evacuate the lab if necessary due to fire or other dangerous situations. Fire alarms are located in the corridor outside the lab. In the case of fire use the closest stairwell to exit the building.

**DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR**

**8. REFERENCES:**

Occupational Health and Safety Act  
 University of Guelph Safety Policy 851.06.06  
 WHMIS  
 Lab SOP’s

**9. DISTRIBUTION OF COPIES:**

Faculty Supervisor and Laboratory Manager  
 Technicians, post doctoral fellows, graduate, project and summer students  
 Environmental Health and Safety Local JHSC, Department of Biomedical Sciences

**Written By:** Esther Semple, Laboratory Manager

**Approved By:** Faculty Supervisor (signature)

**Date:**