

Working Alone: Isolation, Emergency Response and Check-In Systems Meeting Kit



WHAT'S AT STAKE

Working alone means that if something goes wrong, nobody is there to call for help, apply first aid, or even notice that you're in trouble. Most injuries are survivable – but only if help arrives in time.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Lone workers face all the same hazards as anyone else plus one more: no one is watching their back. Incidents that would be minor with a coworker nearby can turn life-threatening when you're working alone.

Medical Emergencies with No Witness A heart attack, allergic reaction, or diabetic episode that happens in front of coworkers gets treated in minutes. The same event alone in a remote area or locked room can be fatal before help arrives.

Slips, Trips and Falls

- A simple fall that causes a head injury or broken bone can leave you unable to call for help
- Falling in a confined or remote space makes you harder to find
- There is no one to stabilize you, apply pressure, or keep you awake

Hazardous Environments Working alone near chemicals, electrical systems, or in confined spaces multiplies the risk. If exposure or a shock occurs, you need immediate help and if you're alone, that help must come from a system you set up before you started.

Getting Trapped or Lost In large facilities, remote sites, or unfamiliar buildings, a worker can become trapped, disoriented, or inaccessible. Without a check-in system, hours can pass before anyone realizes something is wrong.

Violence and Security Risks

- Workers alone in public-facing roles late at night or in isolated locations face higher risk of robbery or assault
- There are no backup and no immediate witness
- Escalations happen faster when there's no one else present

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

When you work alone, your safety system is whatever you set up before you start.

Use the Check-In System – Every Time If your workplace has a lone worker check-in system – whether it's a phone call, an app, or a manual sign-in use it every single time without exception. These systems only work when they're used consistently. If you miss a check-in, the right response from your monitor is to treat it as an emergency. Don't skip it because the job seems short or routine.

Tell Someone Where You're Going

- Before starting alone work, let a supervisor or coworker know your location, what you're doing, and how long you expect to be
- Give them a time when they should expect to hear from you
- If plans change – you move to a different area or the job takes longer – update them immediately

Carry Communication at All Times Your phone, radio, or emergency device should be on your person – not left on a bench, in a bag, or in the truck. If you get hurt and can't move, that device needs to be within arm's reach. Confirm it has signal or charge before you start. In areas with no cell coverage, make sure you have a two-way radio or satellite device instead.

Know Your Emergency Procedures Cold

- Know the emergency number for your site and save it in your phone before you need it
- Know where the nearest first aid kit, eyewash station, and exit are – before you start, not after something happens
- If you feel unwell during alone work, stop the job and contact your check-in person immediately – don't push through it

Match the Risk to the Controls Not all alone work carries the same level of risk. Filing paperwork in an empty office is very different from working alone near energized equipment or chemicals. Know what hazards your specific task involves and make sure your check-in frequency and communication tools match that level of risk. Higher-risk alone work may require more frequent check-ins or a personal alert device that triggers if you stop moving.

FINAL WORD

Nobody plans to be the person who needed help and couldn't get it. Set up your check-in system before you start, keep your communication device close, and never assume the job is too short or simple for something to go wrong.
