Infrastructure Health & Safety Association™

Work Safe for Life

Assessment for Specific Risk: Working Alone or in Small Numbers (WA)

This assessment can be useful to workplaces where work is performed at a fixed location by a single worker or very few workers. This could include settings such as health care facilities and clinics, retail stores, gas stations, factories, manufacturing facilities, industrial settings, and office environments. Examples of activities include:

- Working in a fixed location where there is limited or no access to communication tools and other security devices
- Working in a fixed location where there is high potential for assault, sexual assault, or robbery
- Working in isolated areas within a worksite, away from other workers
- Working in a remote worksite where the public may have access

You are not required to use all or any of the examples of controls. There may be other controls that are more suitable to the circumstances of your workplace and to controlling the risks of workplace violence that you identify.

Job / Department / Location:	Completed by:	Date:

Shading indicates elevated risk

Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (Identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates (if possible)
WA1. **Do you have a security system?**				**Investigate the need for security systems such as:** • personal alarms • fixed alarms connected to security services • video surveillance with a live feed to a central location • regular security patrols		

Risk Assessment Form – Working Alone or in Small Numbers
OHSCO - Workplace Violence and Harassment - IHSA.ca
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Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (Identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates (if possible)

WA2.
Can workers summon immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur?
				Develop and implement regular alarm checks.
				
				Measures and procedures could include:
				
				▪ providing equipment to summon assistance, such as individual or fixed alarms (sounding or silent) or cell phones (pre-programmed to call an emergency number)
				
				▪ providing GPS tracking devices or other locating devices
				
				▪ providing internal and external numbers for workers to call
				    o at all hours of operations
				    o posted or otherwise readily available
				
				▪ establishing an internal code word or words to indicate that help is needed		

WA3. **Is public access to the workplace restricted?**				**Restrict public access to the workplace by:** ▪ providing a single entrance for clients and controlling access to other doors ▪ installing security alarms on outside doors ▪ installing door chimes or other means to notify workers when someone enters the workplace ▪ posting signs about worker-only areas ▪ using cards or keys to access worker-only areas ▪ using reception desks and sign-in procedures ▪ accompanying non-workers in restricted areas ▪ using video surveillance and posting signs to inform people of it ▪ locking the public entrance and providing a bell		

Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (Identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates (if possible)
WA4. **Do workers work at times of increased vulnerability, such as late at night, early in the morning, or at very quiet times of day?**				**Assess higher-risk times and the need for additional measures to protect workers, such as:** • having workers leave the building in groups • arranging for security patrols • joining with neighbouring businesses to coordinate security		
WA5. **Are there any other risks associated with the physical environment and working alone?**				See the **General Physical Environment Assessment** for some other aspects of the physical environment that should be assessed.		
WA6. **Do you have procedures for opening, closing, or securing the workplace prior to starting and at the end of shifts?**				**Develop and implement procedures** for opening, closing, or securing the workplace prior to starting and at the end of shifts. Include procedures for responding to and dealing with unusual circumstances.		
WA7. **Do you maintain regular contact with workers who are working alone?**				**Maintain regular contact with workers by:** • providing cell phones or other communications or monitoring devices • establishing regular contact times or check-in points • designating a person to monitor contact with workers, and to follow up if contact is lost		
WA8. **Do you have procedures for workers to follow when dealing with strangers or intruders?**				**Develop and implement such procedures, which could include:** • how to question strangers or intruders about the appropriateness of their presence in a non-confrontational manner • recommended actions and responses • when to call for assistance or go to a safe area		

Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (Identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates (if possible)
WA9. **Do you have procedures for workers to follow when dealing with aggressive or violent clients or members of the public?**				**Develop and implement such procedures, which could include:** • recommended actions and responses • when to call for assistance or go to a safe area		
WA10. **Are there other measures or procedures needed to protect workers from the risks of working alone?**				Measures and procedures will depend on the specific workplace.		
WA11. **Are workers trained in safety routines for parking, and leaving and returning to their vehicles?**				**Training could include:** • being observant – look and listen • not slinging purses or bags over the shoulder or around the neck • carrying keys in hand • walking around the vehicle and checking the back seat before unlocking the vehicle • locking doors and keeping windows up • how to carry and store valuables • dangers of reading or writing in parked vehicles • maintaining a full gas tank or filling up at well-lit and busy gas stations • how to choose a safe parking spot • looking for adequate light from street lamps		
WA12. **In addition to the above, are workers and supervisors provided with information, instruction, and/or training to protect them from the risks of working alone?**				**Information, instruction, or training could include:** • risks of workplace violence arising from their job or location • relevant measures and procedures		