

Working alone poses unique challenges and risks because there is no one immediately available to offer assistance or support if something goes wrong.

Working alone is a situation that is created when a person who is doing their job cannot be seen or heard by another person, and they do not reasonably expect a visit from another person for an extended amount of time.

While every lone worker scenario may be different, some typical examples of working alone include:

- Being the only staff member on duty during an overnight shift.
- Conducting field work in an isolated area or remote location.
- Staying late to finish up some tasks after everyone else has left for the day.
- Performing work in an area like a basement, rooftop, or utility room.
- Inspecting in-progress or completed work when no one else is on site.
- Completing last minute service, repairs, or emergency work.



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The biggest risk to someone working alone is the potential delay for help to arrive.

- If a lone worker becomes injured, stuck, or unconscious and is not able to call for help, a significant amount of time can pass before anyone discovers the worker needs assistance.
- This delay can cause an injury to become more serious, or even life-threatening.



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When working alone:

- Conduct a hazard assessment before starting any work.
- Establish a check-in procedure with someone else.
- Wear your personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Avoid high-risk tasks that normally require a second person.
- Minimize distractions and maintain situational awareness.
- Report all potential hazards, near misses, incidents, and threats to your personal safety.
- Carry a basic first aid kit and know where emergency equipment is located.
- Familiarize yourself with escape routes and emergency exits.

When working alone having a robust communication plan is vital. It's important that someone else knows where you are and what you are doing.

- Set up scheduled times for regular check-ins with a co-worker or supervisor.
- Ensure you have a list of emergency contact numbers easily accessible.
- There should be clear emergency protocols established. Lone workers should know what happens if they don't check-in as planned, and what to do if they have an emergency and need help.

Before starting a task, it's essential to conduct a thorough risk assessment which might be a job hazard analysis, or something similar that is appropriate for the worksite.

- Identify potential hazards related to the job and the environment.
- Be aware of changes in the environment or tasks that might introduce new hazards.
- Determine the level of risk and whether it's safe to proceed alone.
- Do not plan to do any high-risk tasks alone. Instead, schedule those tasks to be done when there is at least one other person available to assist.
- Lone workers should know ahead of time what they are authorized to do on their own. If unsure, ask a supervisor before proceeding.

Even when working alone, always use the appropriate PPE for your job.

- Ensure your personal protective equipment is in good condition and fits properly.
- Store PPE in a clean and dry place when not in use.
- If you do not have the appropriate PPE for the task, do not proceed.



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When working alone, it's essential to stay focused on the task while also maintaining situational awareness. Distractions should be kept to a minimum.

- Keep your cell phone nearby if that is how you are checking in regularly, but your cell phone should not be a distraction to your job.
- Don't wear headphones, especially if they block your ability to be aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid multitasking, which can lead to missed details or mistakes. If you need to address something unrelated to your task, take a break and address it separately.

Proper lighting and visibility is important for those working during early morning hours, late at night, or in low-light conditions.

- Ensure your workspace is adequately lit.
- Use reflective or high-visibility clothing if necessary.
- Check for and replace any faulty lighting fixtures.

Only use equipment you are trained and authorized to operate.

- Regularly inspect tools and machinery for wear or damage.
- Always follow the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Report any faulty equipment immediately and don't use it until it's repaired or replaced.



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Maintaining your well-being while working alone ensures you stay alert.

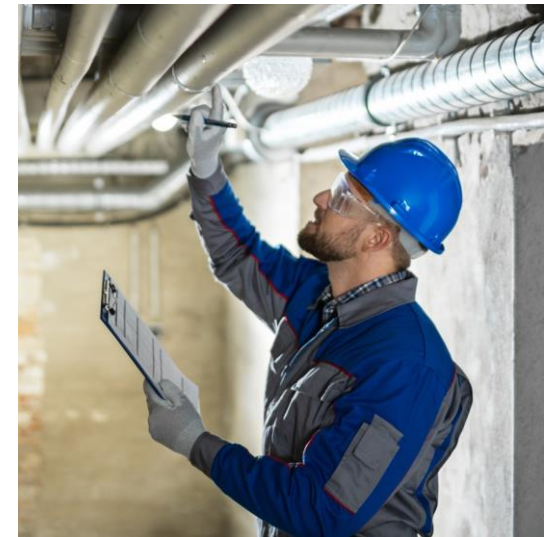
- Drink water regularly, especially in hot conditions.
- Take regular breaks to rest and refresh, reducing the chance of fatigue-related mistakes.
- Pay attention to signs of exhaustion or strain and stop working if you feel unwell.

While every work location is different, it is critically important that lone workers be aware of potential threats, even those that may not be related to the job.

- Lock doors or secure areas if appropriate. If available, be familiar with how to activate and use alarm systems.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially in isolated areas. If you feel unsafe or threatened, leave the area and contact security or the police.

Lone workers need to be able to adapt to a changing work environment.

- If bad weather is forecasted, if equipment breaks, if PPE fails, or if your instincts tell you something isn't quite right, do not proceed as you had originally planned.
- Lone workers must be empowered to contact a supervisor, leave the job site, call the police, or adjust to the situation as needed because **worker safety comes first**.



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