

According to Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, to work alone or in isolation “means to work in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker in case of an emergency, or in case the worker is injured or in ill health.” Actsafe Fact Sheet #14

Regulations – The Law:

Employer and Supervisor Responsibilities: Sections 4.20.2 to 4.21 and 4.23 of the Regulation are concerned with working alone or in isolation.

Workplace Violence: 4.28 to 4.31 cover workplace violence, which should be considered for workers who work alone.

Before workers are assigned to work alone or in isolation the employer should do the following for each new location:

- 1) Identify hazards and assess the risks associated with them.
- 2) Control risks by eliminating hazards, or minimizing risks.
- 3) Educate workers about hazards and how to control risks associated with them.
- 4) Develop and implement a written person-check procedure for checking on lone workers. ****

Summary:

The Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations do NOT restrict employers from assigning staff to work alone or in isolation. However, they are required to design and implement procedures to minimize risk to such employees. One part of the risk-minimizing procedures requires a person-check regime be established for workers who work alone or in isolation. (See Below).

Basic Requirements for a person-check procedure:

It is NOT required that there be more than one worker on site in situations where one worker on the site would be working alone or in isolation. However, a person-check procedure is required under such circumstances.

A person check procedure would require the following (not exhaustive):

- 1) Time intervals between checks; every half hour, or hour depending on level of risk.
- 2) Ensure check-in and check-out is done at the beginning and end of each shift.
- 3) Designate a person (or contract a third-party service provider) who is responsible for establishing contact at the pre-set regular intervals.
- 4) The designated person MUST record each person-check contact.
- 5) Provision of communication equipment by the Employer such as cell phone, two-way radio, trunk radio, etcetera such that the person-check can be completed per schedule.

Sources:

<http://www2.worksafefbc.com/Publications/OHSRegulation/Part4.asp?ReportID=17995>

http://www.actsafe.ca/wp-content/uploads/resources/pdf/FS14_working_alone.pdf