

HRP20: Lone and Isolated Work

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Procedure aims to ensure Southern Cross University (SCU) management, employees, students, and others know the risks associated with lone and isolated work in the workplace and relevant management strategies for the risk mitigation process.

(2) All employees, students, and others must follow this Procedure.

(3) This Procedure applies to all SCU Work Units and sites.

Section 2 - Definitions

Emergency Situation	Situations posing immediate risks to health or safety, including fire, bomb threats, intruders, injuries, sudden illnesses, or accidents.
Remote	A location separated by time or distance from essential services presents significant risk.
Lone worker device	A device that allows emergency contact when out of mobile service can be a satellite phone, Garmin InReach, Personal Location Beacon, EPIRB or equivalent.
Working Alone or in Isolation	Situations where an employee cannot be seen or heard by another person and cannot expect contact for over an hour. This includes working in an office, laboratory, field trips, and or remote locations outside regular hours.
Working When Emergency Response is Limited	Situations where access to emergency services is limited due to working after hours, in remote locations, or in isolation.

Section 3 - General Principles

(4) SCU minimises risks from working remotely or in isolation by:

- Ensuring all employees have access to this procedure and are inducted into the WHSMS.
- Ensuring risk assessments are conducted and approved for all work performed alone or in isolation.
- Maintain reliable communication methods for employees who are approved to work alone or in isolation.
- Submitting travel plans for work conducted in remote or isolated locations involving travel outside the metropolitan area, interstate, or overseas.
- Establishing detailed emergency procedures for all work performed alone or in isolation, including specific actions for different types of emergencies, emergency contact numbers, and locations of emergency equipment.
- Providing psychological support for workers who might face stress or mental health issues due to isolation.

Information, Instruction, and Training

(5) SCU must determine that the employee undertaking the work alone/remotely can undertake the work and record the competency assessment on the authorisation. Employees must have completed appropriate induction training, including emergency evacuation and other necessary procedures, before approval for undertaking the work

alone/remotely. Records of training must be maintained.

Risk Assessment

(6) Before working alone or in isolation, complete a risk assessment, e.g. with WHSMP02 - FOR - 03 - Task Hazard Analysis (one-off occurrence), WHSMP02 - FOR - 10 - Safe Work Instruction Template (repeated occurrences), or WHSMP02-FOR-09 Field Risk Assessment to obtain authorisation from an appropriate supervisor.

(7) For work undertaken regularly, the same risk assessment can be utilised if the conditions remain current as documented on the risk assessment and providing it considers all conditions likely to be experienced during the approval period. The systems provided for communication and equipment used shall be maintained to ensure reliability and effectiveness during an emergency.

(8) The assessment process will identify potential hazards associated with the work:

- a. Eliminate risks to health and safety as far as reasonably practicable.
- b. If unable to eliminate risks, conduct a risk assessment to determine the required control measures.

(9) Following the identification and assessment steps in the risk assessment, control measures will be implemented that consider:

- a. Consider factors such as site access, medical and emergency assistance, supervision level, unattended substances, training, security, communication, and pre-existing medical conditions.
- b. Identifying and designating a contact person.
- c. Identifying the frequency and method of contact required which may include a lone worker device.
- d. Arrangements for rescue, medical, and emergency assistance.
- e. Preparing any Safe Work Instructions (SWI) required.
- f. Obtaining the authority to perform work alone or in isolation.
- g. Periodically evaluate control measures to ensure they remain effective.
- h. Review and improve control measures where results indicate existing measures do not control the risk.

Communication

(10) All persons approved to work alone or in isolation must ensure that reliable means of communication are always maintained. They should notify Security or a supervisor of work commencement and expected completion times when working outside normal hours. A schedule for regular contact with the University or another reliable person, especially for remote or isolated fieldwork, should be established. This could include using a lone worker device such as a satellite phone, Personal Location Beacon (PLB), EPIRB for water, or Garmin InReach.

(11) The extent of these arrangements will depend on the type of work undertaken and the risk assessment outcomes. The amount of contact required whilst working alone or remotely will depend on the potential risk and the experience of the individual undertaking the work.

Low risk working alone

(12) For office or computer-based work or work having been assessed as low risk, the following must be undertaken:

- a. Employees or students working back or coming in outside of regular working and class hours should always advise Security that they are on-site and again when leaving.
- b. When off-campus, a supervisor or alternate contact person should be notified of the work commencement and expected completion times.

- c. All personal security measures, e.g. lock doors, walk in well-lit areas and request a security personal escort as required.
- d. If the working alone time will be greater than 3 hours, arrange times to phone a contact person to confirm personal safety.

Travel Plans

(13) An itinerary must be submitted to supervisors for all work conducted alone or in isolation, including remote or isolated locations and travel outside the metropolitan area, interstate, or overseas. Supervisors must implement safety protocols for working in isolation.

Emergency Response

(14) Appropriate emergency procedures must be established for all work performed alone or in isolation. If necessary, incidents/emergencies should be escalated through the appropriate channels, i.e. 000 Emergency responders, Security on-site, supervisor, etc.

Where Presence of Others Required

(15) Ensure another authorised person is present when performing high-risk activities such as:

- a. Handling exposed, energised electrical or electronic systems.
- b. Using large volumes of flammable solvents or hazardous substances.
- c. Working in extreme temperature environments or confined spaces.

Work Classified as Too Hazardous for Isolation

(16) Perform during regular working hours with qualified assistance and supervision.

Authorisation

(17) Before working alone or in isolation, complete a risk assessment, e.g. WHSMP02 - FOR - 03 - Task Hazard Analysis (one-off occurrence), WHSMP02 - FOR - 10 - Safe Work Instruction Template (repeated occurrences), or WHSMP02-FOR-09 Field Risk Assessment to obtain authorisation from an appropriate supervisor.

(18) For work undertaken regularly, the same risk assessment can be utilised if the conditions remain current as documented on the risk assessment and providing it considers all conditions likely to be experienced during the approval period. The systems provided for communication and equipment used shall be maintained to ensure reliability and effectiveness during an emergency.

After-Hours Emergency

(19) Contact Emergency Services on 000 for life-threatening emergencies.

(20) Contact campus security in an emergency for immediate on-site response.

Section 3 - Roles and Responsibilities

(21) Refer to [WHSMP13: Responsibility and Accountability Statement](#).

Section 4 - Records of Documentation

(22) All relevant documentation will be recorded and kept in accordance with WHS Legislation and other legislative obligations, including:

- a. Maintain records for all work performed alone or in isolation, including risk assessments, communication logs, travel plans, and emergency procedures.
- b. Keep records for specified durations, such as 28 days after work or 2 years after a notifiable incident.

Section 5 - Revision and approval history

(23) This procedure will be reviewed as per nominated review dates or because of other events, such as:

- a. Internal and external audit outcomes.
- b. Legislative changes.
- c. Outcomes from management reviews.
- d. Incidents.

Section 6 - References

Work Health and Safety Act (in the applicable jurisdiction that SCU operates)
Work Health and Safety Regulation (in the applicable jurisdiction that SCU operates)

Section 7 - Related Documents

- WHSMP02 - FOR - 03 - Task Hazard Analysis
- WHSMP02 - FOR - 10 - Safe Work Instruction Template
- [WHSMP13: Responsibility and Accountability Statement](#)

Status and Details

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Effective Date	9th December 2024
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Responsible Executive	Kim Franks Vice President (People and Culture)
Head of Work Unit	Brendan Pearce Director, Workplace Relations
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