

Guidelines to Avoid Working Alone in the Laboratory

Avoid working alone in the laboratory, but when unavoidable, use the following guide:

Complete a hazard assessment of the laboratory activity you will be performing.

- Implement controls to minimize the hazards of the activity.
- Your supervisor must sign off on the assessment and implemented controls.
- Once the assessment is complete, and the controls are in place, determine if the activity can be safely performed while working alone or under an alternative form of supervision.

*****Some laboratory activities are not appropriate to perform alone under any circumstance. Examples may include, but are not limited to work with: pyrophorics, water reactives, explosives, acute toxins, cryogenes, high voltage, highly reactive materials, and hazardous equipment.*****

If your hazard assessment indicates an alternative version of working alone may be used, ensure that the alteration you choose is appropriate for the hazards of your work.

Suggested alternatives for working alone:

- Coordinate with a supervisor or coworker to be present in a nearby office or laboratory while you work. Set a schedule of check-ins with that person.
- Arrange for a virtual meeting (Webex, zoom, etc.) with your supervisor or a coworker. Have the meeting on a device with you in the laboratory while you work.
- Arrange with a coworker or supervisor to schedule periodic check-ins via email, phone, text, etc. while you are working. Let them know when you begin work and when you are finished.
- Create a group schedule of who will be working. When you finish your work, check in with the next worker to confirm that you are finished and leaving the laboratory. The last worker of the day should check in with the supervisor at the end of their shift.