



Vancouver Island West School District 84  
**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM**

**SECTION W**  
**WORKING ALONE PROGRAM**

	<u>Page</u>
<b>Working Alone or in Isolation</b>	1
<b>Identification</b>	1
<b>Principal/Supervisor Responsibility</b>	1
<b>Workplace Assessment</b>	1
<b>Required Procedures</b>	2
<b>Voluntary or Personal Activities</b>	2
<b>Communication</b>	2
<b>Intruders/Vandals</b>	2
<b>Changes or Amendments – and Annual Review</b>	2
<b>Off Hours Entry Logbook (sample)</b>	3

**APPENDIX 1**

**Working Alone Procedure for Custodians**



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**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM**

**SECTION W**

**WORKING ALONE PROGRAM**

**WORKING ALONE OR IN ISOLATION**

WorkSafeBC Regulations require the establishment of a specific checking system when employees are required to work alone or in isolation, under conditions which present a risk of disabling injury if the employee might not be able to secure assistance in the event of injury or other misfortune. Policy B.22, *Safety of Board Personnel and Trustees When Travelling on School District Business*, also outlines the requirement for a specific checking system when travelling alone.

Circumstances where a School District employee may become disabled, to the point of being unable to summon assistance, are rare. Where such circumstances arise, it is possible to reduce or eliminate the risk of disabling injury by instituting work procedures. Where it is determined there is a significant risk to employees in isolation being subjected to the hazard of disabling injury, as defined by the Regulation, the following guidelines will apply in developing work procedures for those employees.

It should be noted that these are guidelines to be used in the development of procedures. Each workplace where employees are working alone or in isolation will need to assess the degree of potential for "disabling injury or other misfortune" and if procedures are required, individual workplace procedures must be developed by the Principal and/or Supervisor, in consultation with the Occupational Health and Safety Committee members and/or Safety Representative and the employees.

**Identification**

Employees required to work alone or in isolation will be identified by the Principal and/or Supervisor. When employees are required to work alone or in isolation, it is the responsibility of the Principal and/or Supervisor to ensure those employees are familiar with the procedures to be followed and ensure appropriate checks are in place to confirm their well being. The frequency and nature of checks is determined by the nature of the hazard; i.e. high risk activities require shorter intervals for checks.

Before instituting any procedure, affected employees will be consulted and, where appropriate, amendments may be made to procedures.

**Principal/Supervisor Responsibility**

Principals and/or Supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees are familiar with the checking procedures appropriate to their duties. Employees are responsible for ensuring they follow the procedures developed for their protection. Failure by Principals, Supervisors or employees to comply with procedures developed is a serious violation of School District policy.

**Workplace Assessment**

Wherever possible, the School District attempts to ensure workers are not required to work alone or in isolation.

When employees are required to work alone or in isolation, the Principal and/or Supervisor will attempt to arrange work schedules and duties to ensure employees are not required to perform duties that might result in the risk of disabling injury. This may include, but not be limited to, restrictions on working from ladders or other elevated work platforms, lifting restrictions (maximum weights, restrictions on lifting awkward loads, etc.), restriction of work areas (e.g. no working in stairwells, confined spaces, crawlspaces, restrictions on equipment to be operated, etc.).

### **Required Procedures**

If it is determined that written work procedures are required, it is the responsibility of the Principal and/or Supervisor, in consultation with the Occupational Health and Safety Committee members and/or Safety Representative and the employees, to develop written procedures.

When working alone in a facility, unless otherwise instructed, all exterior entrances must be secured against entry at all times. Only persons specifically authorized by the Principal and/or Supervisor may be admitted outside normal operating hours.

### **Voluntary or Personal Activities**

If a Principal and/or Supervisor authorizes an employee to enter or use a facility outside normal operating hours, and no other person will be present in the facility, a check-in procedure must be established that is clearly communicated to the employee. If an employee enters or uses a facility outside normal operating hours without the permission of the Principal and/or Supervisor, or without his/her knowledge, then the employee is responsible for establishing a check-in procedure which will ensure his/her safety.

### **Communication**

A person must be designated to establish contact with the employee at predetermined intervals and the person must record the results. Where two-way telephone communication is the designated means of checking on an employee's well being, the schedule for contacting designated personnel must be strictly adhered to. There should be no more than a five-minute variation in contact time, and only then in unusual circumstances. A check at the end of the work shift must also be done.

In case of emergency, employees are reminded that use of the fire alarm system, or telephoning 911 will summon emergency assistance.

### **Intruders/Vandals**

In accordance with the Violence in the Workplace Program established in School District 84, under no circumstances should School District staff become involved in situations involving vandals, intruders or similar situations where their health or safety may be endangered. Employees should retreat to a safe area and summon assistance from the RCMP or other designated agency. Under no circumstances should School District staff attempt to detain persons against their will. If possible, employees should obtain descriptions, license plate numbers or other information that may be of assistance but beyond that, **employees do not become involved**. When possible, a report must be made to the Principal and/or Supervisor.

### **Changes or Amendments – and Annual Review**

The procedure and system for checking an employee's well being must be reviewed at least annually or more frequently, if necessary. If specific circumstances arise which require changes to these procedures, affected employees will be consulted. Changes will be discussed with and approved by the Principal and/or Supervisor, in consultation with the Occupational Health and Safety Committee and/or Safety Representative.



## WORKING ALONE PROCEDURE FOR CUSTODIANS

At certain times of the year (e.g. summer cleaning), the Custodian may be working alone with no other employees in the building. There is a potential for injury when heavy equipment and/or furnishings need to be moved to accomplish the work. The worker could be compromised and not be found for several hours, possibly days.

WCB Regulations require the establishment of a specific checking system when employees are required to work alone or in isolation, under conditions which present a risk of disabling injury if the employee might not be able to secure assistance in the event of injury or other misfortune.

The requirements included in District Regulation B.12, "Working Alone or In Isolation", shall also be followed. A copy is attached to this procedure.

### Procedure

1. No employee shall be required to lift or move any object which is too large or heavy for that employee to safely handle.
2. Any employee who needs to move equipment and/or furnishings that are too heavy to move solely, shall request assistance from another staff member at the worksite.
3. If assistance is not available, the employee shall report this to his/her Supervisor, who shall make arrangements to have assistance provided.
4. During major cleaning times, if there are no other employees in the worksite, the Custodian must establish telephone contact with a designated person at predetermined intervals and that person must record the results.
5. These interval periods must be shortened or lengthened, depending on the level of risk involved in the employee's activities during the day.
6. The Operations Supervisor's office will confirm the contact list with the Custodian prior to each occasion when the employee has the potential for working alone.
7. If the designated person is unable to make telephone contact with the employee at the designated time, that person shall immediately respond by checking the worksite (or delegating such a check) and calling 911 if necessary.
8. These procedures shall be reviewed annually, and amended whenever necessary, to ensure the safety of Custodians while working alone.

*I have read and understand the above procedure, and agree to abide by it:*

Name of Employee (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date