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Purpose	In keeping with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace as noted in the WRHA 'Workplace Safety and Health' policy (20.10.080), the following Operational Procedure has been developed to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of WRHA staff when working alone or in isolation.
Background	This OP supersedes Working Alone or in Isolation dated 2009.

1.0	<u>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</u>
1.1	This operational procedure is also designed to ensure that when followed the minimum requirements of Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health legislation is complied with and where possible exceeded.
1.2	As with all matters relating to the Safety and Health of workers, the Workplace Safety and Health Committee should be consulted for their input.

2.0	<u>DEFINITIONS</u>
2.1	The Act: The Workplace Safety and Health Act W210 of Manitoba.
2.2	Committee: Means a workplace (occupational) safety and health committee established under section 40 of the Workplace Safety and Health Act.
2.3	Employer: 2.3.1 Every person who, by himself or his agent or representative employs or engages one or more workers, 2.3.2 and The Crown and every agency of the government.
2.4	Supervisor: Means a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.
2.5	Worker: 2.5.1 Any person who is employed by an employer to perform a service whether for gain or reward, or hope of gain or reward or not. 2.5.2 Any person engaged by another person to perform services, whether under a contract of employment or not 2.5.2.1 who performs work or services for another person for compensation or reward on such terms and conditions that he is, in relation to that person, in a position of economic dependence upon that person more closely resembling the relationship of any employee than that of an independent contractor, and

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	2.5.2.2. who works or performs services in a workplace which is owned or operated by the person who engages him to perform services, 2.5.3 Any person undergoing training or serving an apprenticeship at an education institution or at any other place.
2.6	Director: Means the person administratively responsible for the department or unit. Director includes heads of departments.
2.7	OESH: Means the Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health Unit
2.8	Working Alone: Means the performance of any work function by a worker who: 2.8.1 Is the only worker for that employer at that workplace at any time 2.8.2 Is not directly supervised by the employer, or another person designated as a supervisor by the employer, at any time.
2.9	Working in Isolation: Means working in circumstances where assistance is not readily available in the event of injury, ill health or emergency.
2.10	Workplace: Means any area or worksite where duties are performed. Can be off WRHA/facility/site/program property.
2.11	Off-Site: Work situations that may put workers at risk include, but are not limited to, the following: 2.11.1 Driving alone in an isolated or infrequently traveled area. 2.11.2 Isolated work with patients/residents/clients during examination and/or treatment which makes the patient/resident/client nervous or agitated. 2.11.3 Working alone in remote locations such as a client's home, hospital, clinic or accident scenes, etc. 2.11.4 Traveling to and from work meetings.
2.12	On-Site: Work situations that may put workers at risk include, but are not limited to, the following: 2.12.1 Working alone in remote locations such as tunnels, clinics, or buildings, etc. 2.12.2 Working alone where there is the availability of drugs and other medicines, such as at a hospital, clinic, and pharmacy or in emergency response vehicles as the area may be more prone to break-ins, robbery or such actions. 2.12.3 Working alone or in isolation where assistance is not readily available, where there is 24-hour access by the public, in a hospital or clinic, in isolation or during evening and night shifts when staffing is often reduced 2.12.4 Working alone or in isolation where assistance is not readily available with patients/residents/client with a history of aggression or violence.

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	2.12.5 Working alone or in isolation and performing a work function that presents high-risk hazards such as: 2.12.5.1 Entering a confined space 2.12.5.2 Working with high energy materials, toxic gases, high voltage electrical systems, or moving equipment. 2.12.5.3 Laboratory functions
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3.0	<u>OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE</u>
3.1	Perform an assessment of the site/program/facility/department to determine which, if any employees work alone or in isolation using the Critical Task and Hazard Assessment form.
3.4	Develop and implement written safe work procedures to eliminate or reduce the identified risks to workers working alone or in isolation which could represent control methods to minimize risks, ways to get help in an emergency or a combination of both. They will include: 3.4.1 The establishment of an effective communication system that consists of: 3.4.1.1 Radio communication 3.4.1.2 Telephone or cellular phone communication 3.4.1.3 Any other means that provide effective communication given the risks involved. 3.4.2 Any of the following 3.4.2.1 A system of regular contact by the employer with the worker working alone or in isolation 3.4.2.2 Limitations on or prohibitions of specified activities 3.4.2.3 The establishment of training requirements
3.5	Where applicable, 3.5.1 Provide emergency supplies for use in traveling or working under conditions of extreme cold or other inclement weather conditions. 3.5.2 Ensure a personal first aid kit meeting the requirements of the regulation is provided to a worker who works alone and does not have ready access to a first aid kit required to be provided as per the regulation.
3.6	Train workers in safe work procedures.
3.7	Ensure that workers comply with the safe work procedures.
3.8	Have safe work procedures readily available for workers.
3.9	Review and revise the procedures not less than every three years or sooner if circumstances at a workplace change in a way that poses a risk to the safety and health of a worker working alone or in isolation.

4.0	<u>RESPONSIBILITIES</u>
4.1	<u>Employer:</u> 4.1.1 Act in accordance with the objects and purposes of the Act by ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all his workers, and complying with the Act and regulations.

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	4.1.2 Ensure that all his/her workers, and particularly his supervisors, foremen/women, chargehands, or similar persons, are acquainted with any safety or health hazards that may be encountered by the workers in the course of their service and that workers are familiar with the use of all devices or equipment provided for their protection.
4.2	Facility/Program Executive Team: 4.2.1 Assign responsibilities to staff within the facility/program to ensure the implementation of this operational procedure. 4.2.2 Ensure resources (information, training, tools, equipment, and time) are provided and maintained. 4.2.3 Support the Operational Procedure throughout the facility/program.
4.3	Directors/Managers/Supervisors/Leads: 4.3.1 Ensure compliance with all aspects of the regulations. The department director is responsible for ensuring that their area of responsibility complies with all aspects of the regulations and this operational procedure. 4.3.2 Identify situations where workers work alone or in isolation either on-site or off-site. 4.3.3 Conduct a hazard assessment of the identified situation. This may include the job, the site, and the patient/resident/client. ON or OFF SITE: When assigning a worker to conditions or circumstances where they will be working alone or in isolation at the place of employment, the employer shall assess the risk(s), taking into consideration the following: 4.3.3.1 Client behaviour 4.3.3.2 Location (unsafe area, isolation, poor lighting, unlit parking, unsafe building) 4.3.3.3 Presence of dangerous items (weapons, vicious pet) 4.3.3.4 Availability of emergency assistance 4.3.4 As much as reasonably practical, eliminate or reduce the risk(s) by implementing hazard controls for working alone or in isolation. This may include: 4.3.4.1 Implementation of a “buddy system” where arrangements are made for a second person to accompany the employee in a high-risk situation 4.3.4.2 Arrangement to meet the client at an alternate safe location 4.3.4.3 Use of security services 4.3.4.4 Defer service until proper safety measures can be implemented 4.3.4.5 Have a contingency plan for service provision in case of inclement weather, labour actions, etc. 4.3.4.6 Train workers to be able to deal with unexpected circumstances 4.3.4.7 Provide required safety equipment 4.3.5 Managers shall establish an effective means of communication. An effective communication plan for workers who are working alone or in isolation will be developed for each situation and shall include: 4.3.5.1 Provision of an appropriate communication device (cell phone if no landline accessible, personal protective devices, or other means, etc.) 4.3.5.2 The phone number of a primary contact person

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	4.3.5.3 Procedures for phoning a designated person prior to and after leaving the situation (before and after check-in procedures) 4.3.5.4 Decision-making criteria for actions the worker is to take if the situation becomes unsafe 4.3.5.5 Emergency procedures to track a worker's whereabouts if unable to contact the worker or if the worker fails to check in. 4.3.6 Establish written safe work procedures based on the above. See Operational Procedure – Safe Work Procedure. 4.3.7 Managers/ supervisors shall ensure workers are trained on their safe work procedures and site-specific processes for working alone and in isolation. 4.3.8 The manager shall ensure that workers receive the required safety and/or communication equipment. 4.3.9 Managers shall ensure that workers comply with working alone or in isolation safe work procedures.
4.4	4.4 Worker Shall 4.4.1 Report any occupational health and safety concerns to their supervisor. 4.4.2 Participate in the identification of risks related to working alone or in isolation and in the development of safe work practices. 4.4.3 Follow safe work practices and procedures.
4.5	4.5 Department/Facility/Program Workplace Safety and Health Committees Shall 4.5.1 Consult with the facility/site/program on the development and implementation of this operational procedure. 4.5.2 Review and monitor the effectiveness of this operational procedure. 4.5.3 Assist employer to identify risks arising from conditions and circumstances where workers are required to work alone 4.5.4 Assist employer to develop accepted safe work procedures for working alone. 4.5.5 Respond to workers' safety concerns.
4.6	4.6 Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health Shall 4.6.1 Consult with the facility/site/program/department on all aspects of this operational procedure. 4.6.2 Assist the facility/program/site in the assessment of the site/program/facility to determine which, if any employees work alone or in isolation. 4.6.3 Assist the facility/program/site in identifying the risks arising from the conditions and circumstances of the worker's work. 4.6.4 Assist the facility/program/site in assessing the risks identified in 4.6.2 4.6.5 Assist the facility/program/site in developing and implementing written safe work procedures to eliminate or reduce the identified risks to workers working alone or in isolation.
5.0	<u>TRAINING REQUIREMENTS</u>
5.1	The training program must be workplace-specific, effective, and reviewed every three years or when changes that may affect the procedure are introduced in the workplace.

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6.0	REFERENCES
6.1	Critical Tasks Hazard Assessment Form Government of Manitoba. (2022). The Workplace Safety and Health Act – W210 10/02. Winnipeg: Queen’s Printer. www.safemanitoba.com Government of Manitoba. (2022). The Workplace Safety and Health Regulation 217/2016. Winnipeg: Queen’s Printer. www.safemanitoba.com Winnipeg Regional Health Authority – Operational Procedure – Hazard Identification and Control Winnipeg Regional Health Authority – Operational Procedure – Safe Work Procedures