

Staying in Touch - when working alone

Saskatchewan's occupational health and safety legislation defines *working alone* as being the only worker at a worksite, where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of injury, ill health or emergency.

ASK: What are some situations where a worker would be working alone?

The legislation states that when a worker is required to work alone, or at an isolated place of employment, the employer, in consultation with the occupational health committee or representative, **shall identify the risks** that result from the conditions and circumstances of the work being done or **from working alone**.

Legislation also states that there must be an effective communication plan in place, and this can consist of:

- radio communication;
- phone or cellular communication; or
- any other means that provides effective communication

Risks that are identified need to be eliminated or managed - *Staying in Touch* is one way to eliminate or manage some of the risks that may be identified.

ASK: What are some of the risks that could result from working alone, and how could these risks be eliminated or managed?

Staying in Touch could include procedures such as:

- preparing a daily work plan specifying where the worker will be and at what times
- designating a main contact person and a back-up to whom the lone worker checks in with; having the contact person check in on the lone worker periodically, through either phone calls or physical visits, should also be part of the procedure
- clarifying how often, and under what circumstances, a lone worker is required to check in
- keeping a written log of the contact made
- limitations on, or prohibition/elimination of, specific activities
- deciding on a *code word* (such as "white") when the lone worker needs help; the use of panic buttons or call bells
- creating an emergency plan when the lone worker does not check in at designated times
- knowing cellular coverage; have a plan when there is no coverage
- reporting vehicle information (e.g., year, make, model, color, license plate number)
- reporting the plan of travel (e.g., highway number, grid road information)
- provision of personal protective equipment, emergency supplies for use in traveling, cellular phone (with charger)

Being accountable for safety is everyone's responsibility:

- the lone worker must be accountable to check in as required
- the employer must be accountable to monitor the lone worker

The plan for *Staying in Touch* must be developed and communicated to all workers so that everyone knows and follows the plan.

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!