



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

University Lone Working Policy and Guidance

Rev.2.0

Updated 20/04/2022

University Lone Working Policy

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin has a duty to all staff and students that may have cause to be working alone, under the Safety Regulations, which state that:

Without prejudice to the generality of section 19 of the Act, an employer shall, in identifying hazards and assessing risks under that section, take account of particular risks, if any, affecting employees working alone at the place of work or working in isolation at remote locations;

to ensure they have a safe and healthy working environment. It is the policy of the University to comply with this legislation and any guidance made under this legislation and to conform, as far as is reasonably practicable, to best practice.

Trinity College Dublin further recognises that some staff and students are required to work alone while others choose to do so. In order to comply with the University Lone Working Policy appropriate measures must be put in place to provide safe systems of work and a safe environment for those who work alone, by the School, Unit or Discipline.

This policy on Lone Working will apply to all staff, visiting academics, students engaged in university work and contractors employed by the University while working in the University's buildings, facilities and vehicles, to all staff and students working in buildings and facilities provided by other organisations and to those working in the community, on site visits and field trips. It equally applies to staff and students who are working abroad on College business or who are on work-based learning placements/internships that are part of their course in the University.

The College acknowledges that the risk will vary depending on the nature of the work that is being carried out whilst working alone. General office-based activities or 'paperwork' type activities are generally classified as being low to medium risk and are acceptable under normal conditions and can be covered through the local area safety statement.

The majority of laboratory work, maintenance works, workshop activities, fieldwork in remote areas, handling of hazardous (biological, chemical, radioactive) agents, etc. are likely to be medium to high risk activities and must not be undertaken without completion of a Lone Worker Risk Assessment. The college also acknowledges that there are also some activities that must not be carried out alone, and that some activities (low risk fieldwork or research) may also fall into a lower risk category too.

Heads of Units/Schools or Discipline and other responsible persons must ensure that this policy and associated guidance is fully complied with. A Unit may introduce local rules and policies that impose other arrangements relating to lone working provided that the minimum requirements of this policy are met.

All staff and students who carry out lone working must take care of their own safety and comply with all other university policies, local rules and procedures. Failure to comply with the policy will be considered a disciplinary issue and may result in any privilege to lone working being withdrawn.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure its adequacy and to assess its performance.

Approved by the Board of College on 24/06/2020.

Reviewed by College Safety Committee 20/04/2022.

Reviewed and no changes required 20/08/2024.

Guidance to the University Lone Working Policy (updated April 2022)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The principal purpose of this Policy is to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all lone workers (staff and students) in Trinity College, Dublin by developing a continuum of responses that ensure an environment where staff, students and visitors are safe.

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007, Regulation 2(3) states that:

[2 \(3\) Without prejudice to the generality of section 19 of the Act, an employer shall, in identifying hazards and assessing risks under that section, take account of particular risks, if any, affecting employees working alone at the place of work or working in isolation at remote locations.](#)

In addition, the Policy requires the University to reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, all reasonably foreseeable risks associated with Lone Working and to detail arrangements to achieve this reduction in line with legislative requirements. The main hazards that are generally associated with lone working are exposure to violence and poor access to emergency assistance.

In the University context there are many examples of lone working both during normal working hours and outside of normal hours. These might include

- Persons working alone within a laboratory or workshop;
- Persons working alone in a remote office, reception or classroom;
- Staff carrying out field work alone
- Unaccompanied home visitors
- Cleaners
- Manual staff such as Electricians, Plant Operators and Drivers;
- Security staff.

2.0 SCOPE

The Policy on Lone Working will apply to all staff, visiting academics, students engaged in university work and contractors employed by the University while working in the University's buildings, facilities and vehicles, to all staff and students working in buildings and facilities provided by other organisations and to those working in the community, on site visits and field trips. It equally applies to staff and students who are working abroad on College business or who are on work-based learning placements/internships that are part of their course in the University.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- Lone Workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision or without direct or close contact with a colleague. In reality this means working in an environment in which, if rendered incapacitated or unconscious, a person cannot reasonably expect to be found within 15 minutes. The main hazard in lone working is that in the event of an accident that incapacitates them, a person will not be able to contact or summon help.
- It **does not** include the chance or occasional occurrence of being on one's own at work. For example, in every workplace there is somebody who arrives first and somebody who leaves last, or an individual may need to go to an unoccupied storeroom etc.

[Document title]

- An individual who has either visual or audible communication with another employee **is not** considered as working alone.
- Lone working is not restricted to out-of-hours working but can occur at any time especially during fieldwork (i.e. study that consists of practical activities that are done away from your school or place of work)

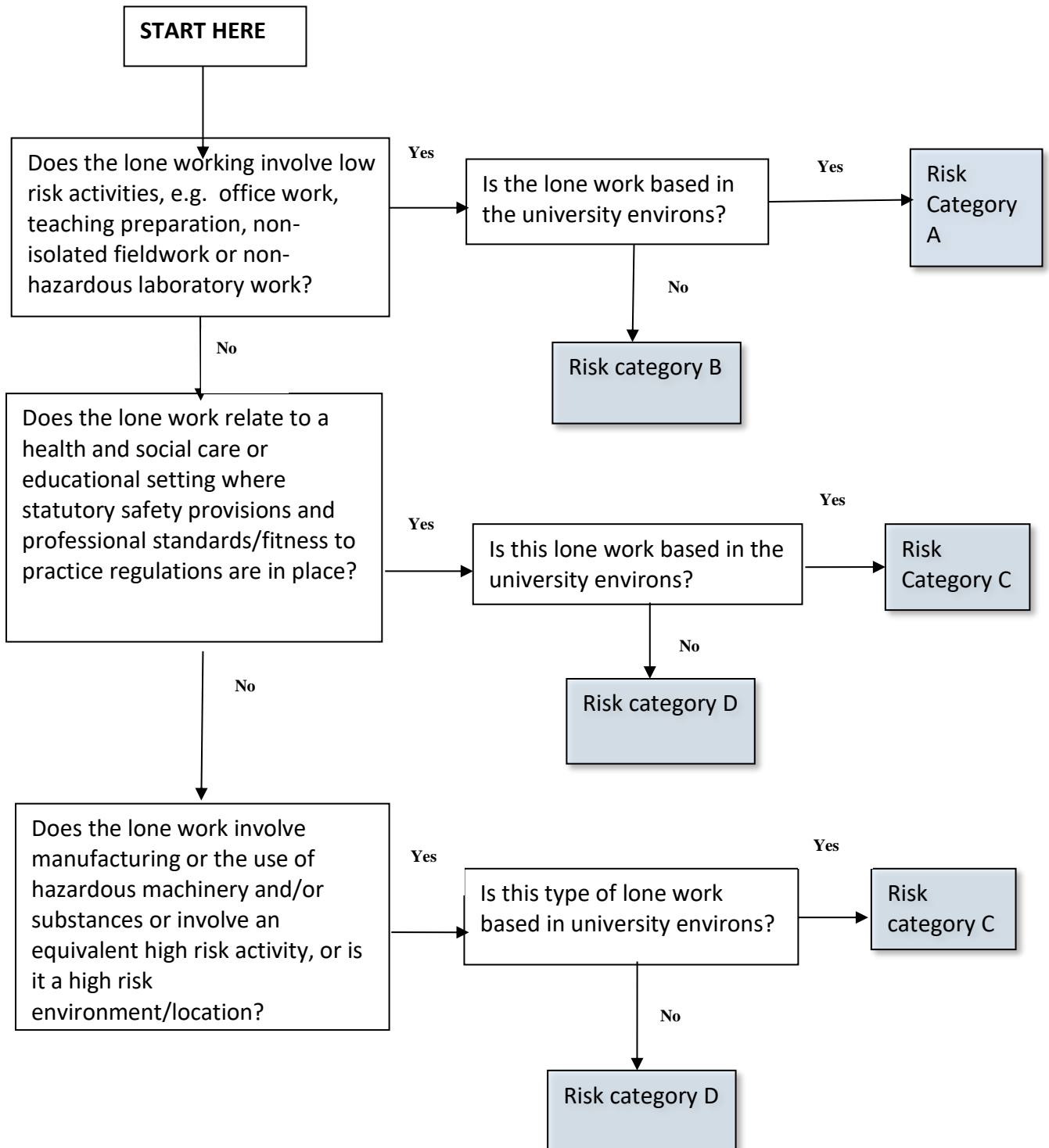
4.0 PROCEDURES

- The overall Policy is to keep to a minimum the number of lone workers within college. Where lone working occurs, it is the responsibility of the Head of School/Unit /Discipline to ensure that staff and students comply with this policy and risk assessments are carried out for particular tasks and activities
- The assessment may be documented as part of a project risk assessment, as school local rules or documented in the local safety statement.
- The Lone Working Risk Categorisation Chart (Appendix 1) can be used to help identify the level of risk and ensure appropriate control measures put in place. This document provides guidance for such categorisation. Where Category B or D is selected i.e. in the case of isolated fieldwork or remote-working, additional location related assessments, ie travel assessments or teleworking assessments must be also completed.
- A checklist to assist in the identification of potential hazards is available in Appendix 2.
- A Unit may introduce local rules and policies that impose other arrangements relating to lone working provided that the minimum requirements of this policy are met.
- All staff and those students identified as Lone Workers should familiarize themselves with the contents of this Policy and the associated procedures.
- Employees have a duty of care to themselves and to others in relation to Health and Safety and must comply with any processes/control measures that have been provided by their school/unit/discipline for their safety. Questions should be directed to their relevant supervisors.
- Each Head of School / Head of Area must ensure that there are procedures in place for lone working (including out-of-hours access) and the associated supplementary documents such as risk assessments.
- It is recommended that undergraduate students should never be engaged in lone working, i.e. are not be permitted out-of-hours access to buildings other than designated 24-hr facilities or with direct supervision.
- The risk assessments should include general risks associated with the building (such as reduced heating, unlit corridors etc.) or the environment in which it is carried out in (e.g. in the community) and specific risks associated with the task.
- Lone working in the field or in the community is permitted only if the risk assessment shows that the risk is low and all that controls indicated by the risk assessment are implemented.
- Every lone working procedure or assessment must include a clear designation of responsibilities for enforcing the procedure, and any training requirements
- Types of hazards that may be of a concern to lone working are detailed in Appendix 3, and examples of possible control measures are available in Appendix 4.
- Appendix 5 details examples of the lone working assessment process.

Any queries on this policy and its guidance notes can be sent to safetyoffice@tcd.ie

APPENDIX 1

LONE WORKING RISK CATEGORISATION CHART



Risk Categories

Risk Category A Low risk activities e.g. office work, teaching preparation, or non-hazardous laboratory work, carried out on campus	Low Risk, can be included in Safety Statement, with additional control measures mentioned in Appendix 4
Risk Category B Lower risk activities e.g. non-isolated fieldwork, office-based work, carried out off campus either in Ireland or abroad	Low-Medium depending on location of work, may require additional location related assessments; travel assessment; teleworking assessment
Risk Category C Lab-based or research type activities which depending on the risks associated with the work may require detailed assessments and procedures put in place	Medium-High, detailed procedures, assessments and control measures required
Risk Category D As Risk Category C but due to a different location (i.e. unavailability of Campus Emergency Procedures)	Medium-High, detailed procedures, assessments and control measures required, depending on location of work, may require additional location related assessments; travel assessment; teleworking assessment

APPENDIX 2. AN EXAMPLE OF A LONE WORKING HAZARD ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

To assist in completing the risk assessment

Hazard	Y/N	Controls/further action
The Nature of the Work		
Is it appropriate for the worker to be alone whilst carrying out particular work activities (eg a buddy should be on hand when working with most hazardous materials)		
Is there adequate information and instruction for the worker to be able to work alone safely?		
Are there hazards associated with the machinery, tools and equipment that may be used?		
high risk activity (e.g. work at heights, with electricity, with hazardous substances or work with hazardous equipment, such as chainsaws or lathes)		
Is fatigue likely to increase risk (e.g. with long hours driving a vehicle or operating machinery)?		
Is there risk of attack by an animal? (dogs during home visits)		
Is the worker likely to be exposed to extremes of temperature?		
Is the lone worker more at risk due to their gender, age or inexperience?		
The Location of the work		
If the worker is working inside a locked building, will emergency services be able to gain access if the worker is unable to let them in		
If the worker is working inside a building, is there a system for emergency services to locate them (e.g. sign-in book) if the worker is unable to communicate with them directly		
Is lighting at entrances and exits to buildings and parking areas adequate?		
Are security measures adequate, including alarm maintenance and testing scheduling, video or patrols?		
Is the work in a remote location?		

Is the work in a location which increases the risk of violence to workers (e.g. from people affected by drugs or alcohol or in a location with a high incidence of crime)?		
Does the form of transport increase the risk (e.g. public transport in a remote or dangerous area)		
Are there risks associated with the environment in which the work is carried out (e.g. water bodies, remote locations, poor phone coverage, attack by people?)		
First Aid and Emergencies		
Is first aid equipment available for immediate treatment		
Are there means of raising an alarm in the event of an emergency		
Are there arrangements for a response to an emergency		
Communications		
Does the worker have access to a communications system (e.g. mobile or satellite phones, SafeZone, alarm systems)?		
Will the emergency communication or alarm system work properly in all situations		
Are there procedures for regular contact with the worker who works alone?		
Are there end-of-shift procedures for checking in with the worker		
Are workers authorised to contact emergency services directly?		
Is voice communication essential for the safety of the worker		
Training and Information		
Has the worker had training to prepare them for working alone and, where applicable, in remote locations		
Does the worker speak English (or the local language if abroad) or is there anything that would interfere with his or		

her ability to communicate with someone in an emergency?		
Are there procedures to ensure knowledge of workers' whereabouts (e.g. clients' addresses, expected arrival and return times)?		
Are there procedures for incident reporting so that all workers are aware of local risks (e.g. clients' history of violence)?		
Other Hazards		

APPENDIX 3: POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH LONE WORKING

From:

http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Healthcare_Sector/Guidance_on_Lone_Working_in_the_Healthcare_Sector.pdf

The hazards facing “Lone Workers” are the same as for other workers; however they may face increased or additional risk from:-

- Lack of Supervision / Training
- Working in remote areas
- Sudden Illness / emergencies
- Risks related to transport / driving
- Effects of social isolation
- Communication
- Work Equipment
- Violence and abuse (from members of the public and others)
- Theft / Intruders
- Fire

What issues should the employer address when planning safe working arrangements for lone workers?

When establishing safe working arrangements for lone workers, employers need to know the law and standards that may apply to their specific work activity. They must then assess if the requirements of that work activity can be met by people working alone. Issues that need to be addressed when planning such safe working arrangements are:

1. Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person?

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions such as:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person? Can any temporary access equipment that is necessary, such as portable ladders or trestles, be safely handled by one person?
- Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person? Consider whether the work involves lifting objects too large for one person or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?

2. Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

Check that lone workers have no medical conditions which may make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek medical advice if necessary. Consider both

routine work and foreseeable emergencies, which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

3. What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. Training may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations. Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and precautions fully. Employers should set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone. They should ensure employees are competent to deal with circumstances that are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, e.g. when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor and how to handle aggression.

4. How will the person be supervised?

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still an employer's duty to ensure their safety and health at work. Supervision can help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. Supervisors can also provide guidance in situations of uncertainty. Supervision of safety and health can often be carried out when checking the progress and quality of the work; it may take the form of periodic site visits combined with discussions in which health and safety issues are raised.

The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle safety and health issues. Employees new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job which presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied at first. The level of supervision required is a management decision, which should be based on the findings of risk assessment, i.e. the higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they require assistance.

APPENDIX 4: CONTROL MEASURES

WHAT CONTROL MEASURES COULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO MINIMISE THE RISK TO LONE WORKERS?

The risk assessment should prescribe control measures to be implemented in order to eliminate/minimise the identified risks. Such control measures may include:

- communication is very important: mobile phone, telephone or radio
- controlled periodic checks
- SafeZone (College’s automatic warning device, panic alarms, no movement alarms, automatic distress message systems, i.e. pre-recorded message sent if not actively cancelled by operative, etc.)
- Instruction and training in proper procedures, e.g. code words for potentially violent situations when combined with mobile phone communication.
- use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- health surveillance
- first-aid kits and training
- implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s)
- locking and securing place of work
- implementing correct incident reporting procedures
- provision of counselling
- buddy system
- Location/locating systems, i.e. SafeZone monitored by College Security
- Specific emergency procedures

The chart below details the relationship between the categories (Appendix 1) and control measures (Appendix 4) and guides one to the type of control measures that may be required or considered.

Control Measures[†]	Category A	Category B	Category C	Category D
Means of communication: mobile phone, telephone, radio	√	√	√	√
Controlled Periodic Checks			√	√
Automatic warning devices (SafeZone)*, e.g. panic alarms, man-down alarms, automatic distress message systems, i.e. pre-recorded message sent if not actively cancelled by operative, etc.	√	√	√	√
Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)			√	√
Health Surveillance			√	√
First Aid Kits and First Aid Training			√	√
Implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s)			√	√
Locking and securing place of work			√	√
Instruction, Information and Training	√	√	√	√

Prohibition of Lone working?			√	√
Additional assessments based on location		√		√

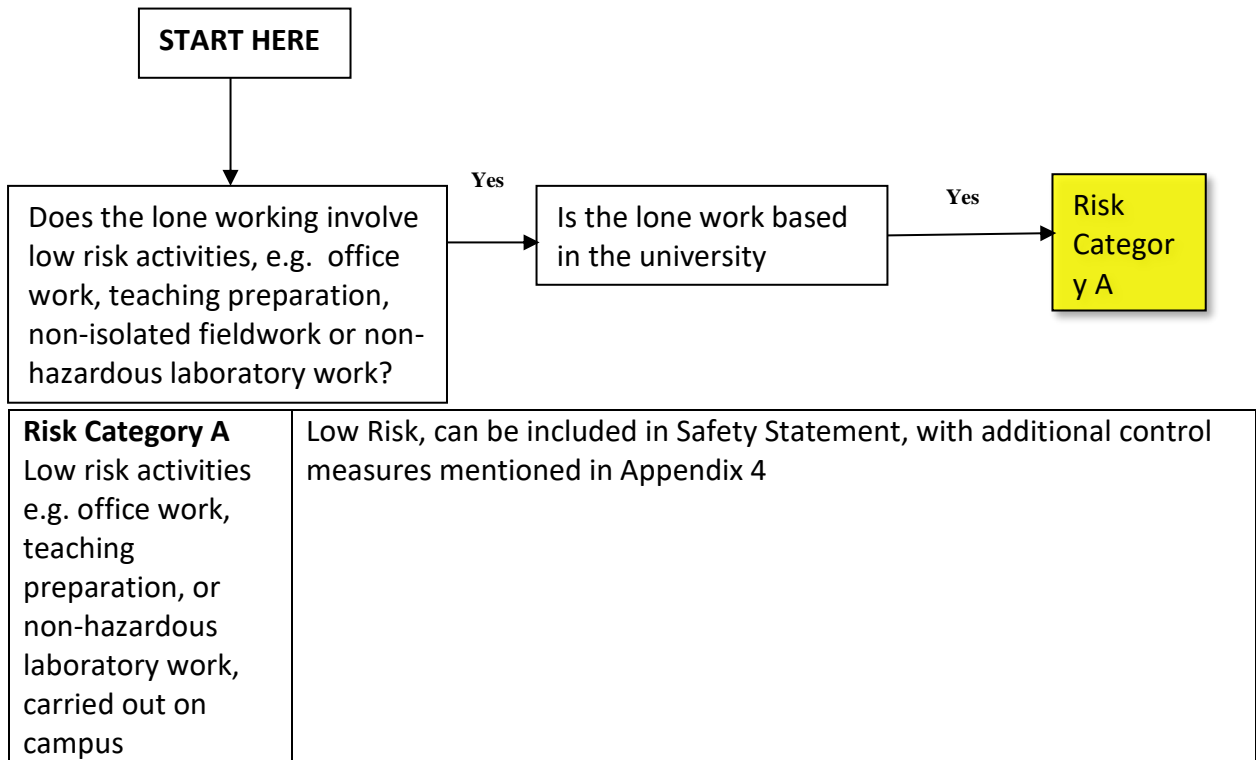
† This would not be exhaustive and dependent on the work, individual, location

* SafeZone

APPENDIX 5. EXAMPLES OF THE LONE WORKING ASSESSMENT PROCESS

N.B. Examples are simply illustrative and are not designed to be exhaustive nor to suggest that superficially similar cases need the same control measures. These are dependent on the specific work, individual, and location involved.

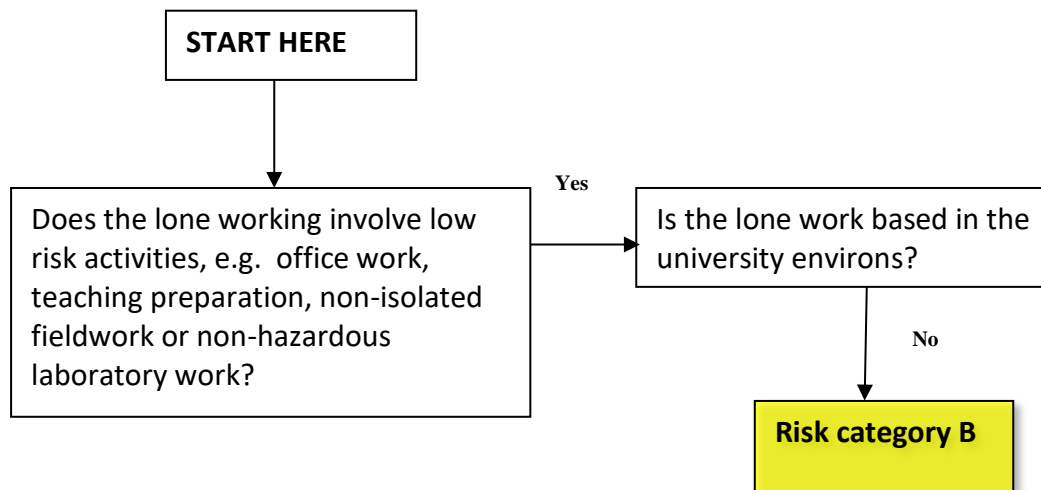
CATEGORY A



Specifically, **Category A** would be assigned to those working in an office environment, possibly at weekends when less people are around. The protection of lone workers can be described in the local safety statement which may include the requirements:

1. To have a means of communication, i.e. a mobile phone or telephone to advise someone where they will be or to raise the alarm;
2. To use the Safezone App to check in when you arrive and check out when you leave. If necessary, you can use the alert buttons to raise an alert too; and
3. To provide instruction and Information on the process, how to use the App and how to raise an alarm in an emergency.

CATEGORY B

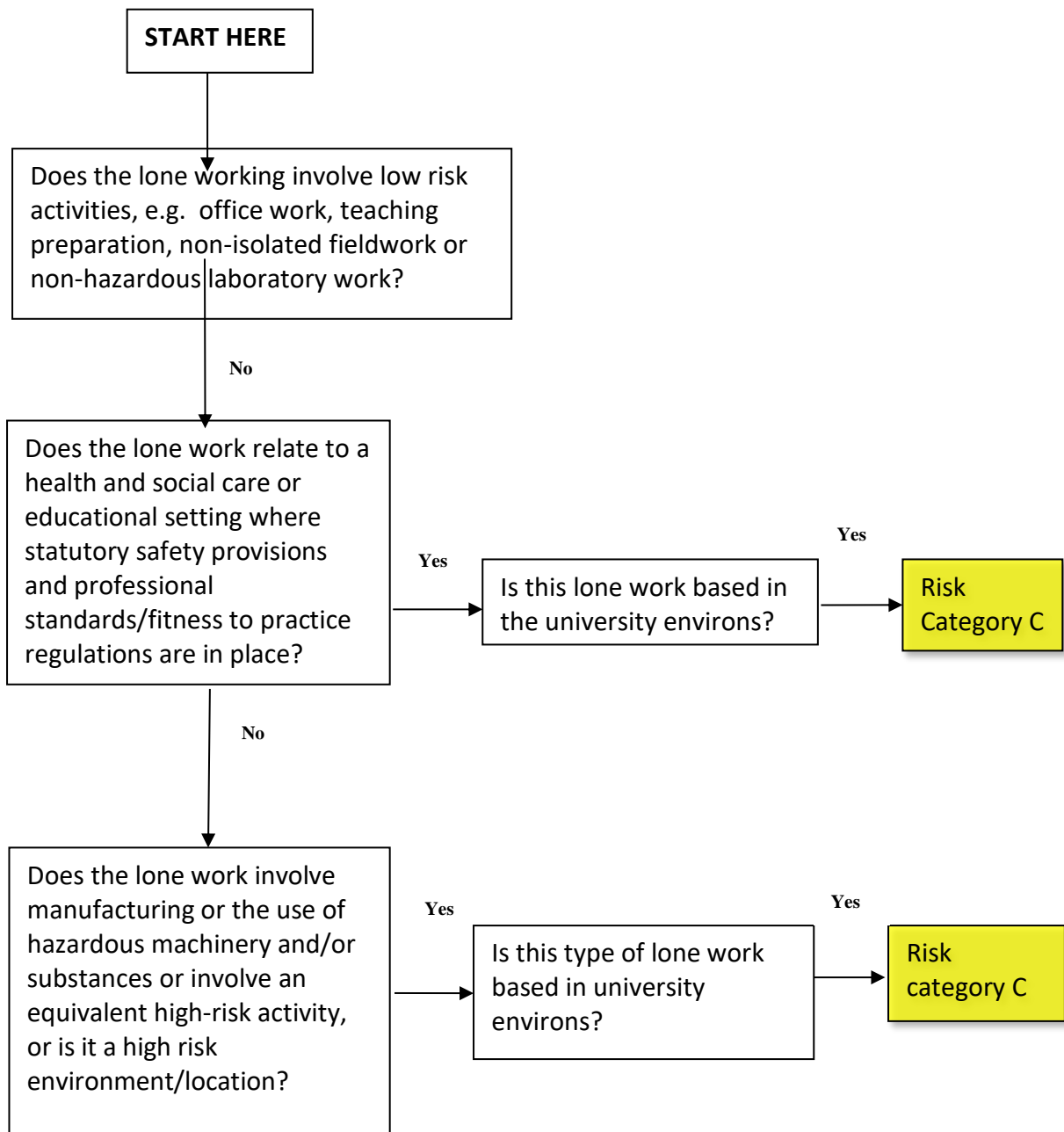


Risk Category B Lower risk activities e.g. non-isolated fieldwork, office-based work, carried out off campus either in Ireland or abroad	Low-Medium depending on location of work, may require additional location related assessments; travel assessment; teleworking assessment
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As for Category A, the same will apply but by virtue of the change in location, additional assessments in relation to your new location or travel will also be required and these may be used to include the information on working alone. In this case, these assessments can include the information specifically on protection while lone working, i.e.:

1. To have a means of communication, i.e. a mobile phone or telephone to advise someone where they will be or to raise the alarm;
2. To use the Safezone App to check in when you arrive and check out when you leave. If necessary, you can use the alert buttons to raise an alert too.
3. Provision of information on the process, how to use the App and how to raise an alarm in an emergency.

CATEGORY C



Risk Category C (Lab-based or research type activities which depending on the risks associated with the work may require detailed assessments and procedures put in place)

Medium-High, detailed procedures, assessments and control measures required

The risk assessment should prescribe control measures to be implemented in order to eliminate/minimise the identified risks. For this category the lone working checklist should be completed.

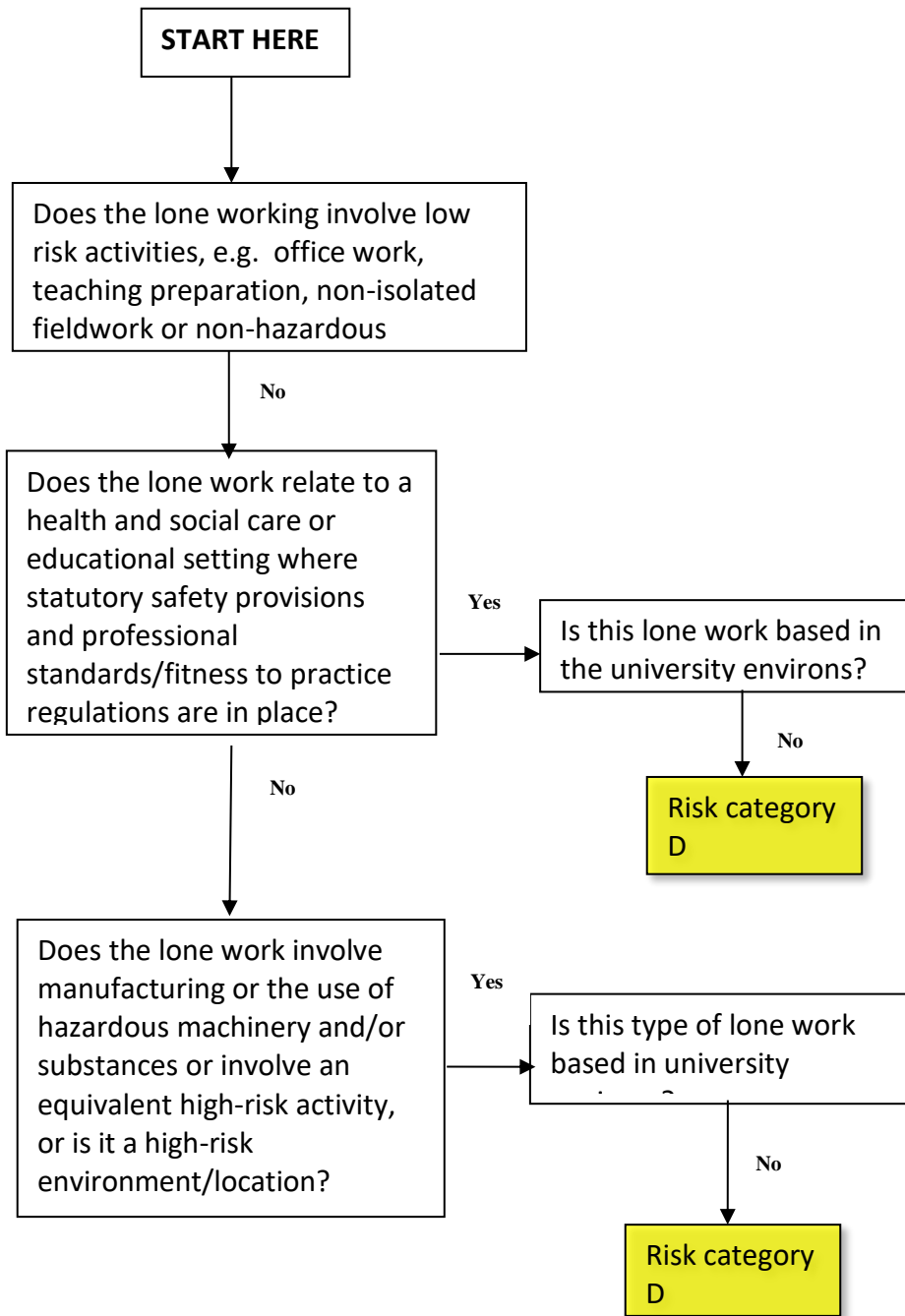
Such control measures may include:

- communication is very important: mobile phone, telephone or radio
- controlled periodic checks
- Automatic warning device (SafeZone App), including. panic alarms, no movement alarms, automatic distress message systems, i.e. pre-recorded message sent if not actively cancelled by operative, etc.
- first-aid kits and training
- implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)
- locking and securing place of work
- implementing correct incident reporting procedures
- provision of counselling
- Location/locating systems, i.e. SafeZone monitored system
- Specific emergency procedures

Specifically, **Category C** suggests the following control measures are considered. These would not be exhaustive and dependent on the work, and the individual:

1. Means of communication: mobile phone, telephone, radio
2. Controlled Periodic Checks
3. Automatic warning devices*, e.g. Safezone App, panic alarms, man-down alarms, automatic distress message systems, i.e. pre-recorded message sent if not actively cancelled by operative, etc.
4. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
5. Health Surveillance
6. First Aid Kits and First Aid Training
7. Implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)
8. Locking and securing place of work
9. Instruction, Information and Training
10. Prohibition of Lone working

CATEGORY D



<p>Risk Category D (as Risk Category C but due to a different location (i.e. unavailability of Campus Emergency Procedures)</p>	<p>Medium-High, detailed procedures, assessments and control measures required, depending on location of work, may require additional location related assessments; travel assessment; teleworking assessment</p>
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The risk assessment should prescribe control measures to be implemented in order to eliminate/minimise the identified risks. For this category the lone working checklist should be completed.

Such control measures may include:

- communication is very important: mobile phone, telephone or radio
- controlled periodic checks
- Automatic warning device (SafeZone App), including. panic alarms, no movement alarms, automatic distress message systems, i.e. pre-recorded message sent if not actively cancelled by operative, etc.
- first-aid kits and training
- implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)
- locking and securing place of work
- implementing correct incident reporting procedures
- provision of counselling
- Location/locating systems, i.e. SafeZone monitored system
- Specific emergency procedures

Specifically, **Category D** suggests the following control measures are considered. These would not be exhaustive and dependent on the work, individual, and location:

1. Means of communication: mobile phone, telephone, radio
2. Controlled Periodic Checks
3. Automatic warning devices*, e.g. Safezone App, panic alarms, man-down alarms, automatic distress message systems, i.e. pre-recorded message sent if not actively cancelled by operative, etc.
4. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
5. Health Surveillance
6. First Aid Kits and First Aid Training
7. Implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)
8. Locking and securing place of work
9. Instruction, Information and Training
10. Prohibition of Lone working

As for Category C, the same will apply but by virtue of the change in location, additional assessments in relation to your new location or travel will also be required and these may be used to include the information on working alone. In this case, these assessments can include the information specifically on protection while lone working, i.e.:

1. To have a means of communication, i.e. a mobile phone or telephone to advise someone where they will be or to raise the alarm;
2. To use the Safezone App to check in when you arrive and check out when you leave. If necessary, you can use the alert buttons to raise an alert too.
3. Provision of information on the process, how to use the App and how to raise an alarm in an emergency.

