



Department of Mechanical, Manufacturing and Biomedical Engineering (MMBE)

MMBE Lone Working and Out-of-hours Working Policy

Introduction

The [University Lone Working Policy Rev 1.0](#) (Appendix A) was passed by College Board in June 2020.

Some key points from the policy include:

- 1. 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.*
- 2. 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.*
- 3. 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.*
- 4. 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.*
- 5. 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.*
- 6. 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.*

Lone Working and Out-of-hours Working

MMBE Lone Working and Out-of-hours Working Policy has been established to comply with the University Policy by ensuring, as far as reasonably practical, safe systems of work and a safe environment for those who work alone or out-of-hours. The overall policy is to keep the number of lone workers and out-of-hours workers within MMBE to a minimum.

Lone working is not only restricted to out-of-hours working, lone working can occur at any time. Out-of-hours working can eliminate the lone working element by using a “buddy” system. Where this is not possible, lone working should not occur out-of-hours.

Lone Workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision or without direct or close contact with a colleague. 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.

Examples of lone working both during normal working hours and outside of normal hours might include:

- **Risk category A**, persons working alone in an office, reception or classroom
- **Risk category B**, persons working alone at a lab-based PC
- **Risk category C**, persons working alone within a laboratory to complete routine experimental work
- **Risk category D**, persons working alone within a laboratory or workshop to complete potentially hazardous work

Where lone working occurs, staff and students must comply with this policy, risk assessments for lone working above Risk category A within MMBE are compulsory. All equipment RAs and SOPs, must also be up to date before you commence your work.

Undergraduates are not permitted to engage in lone working within MMBE. Any project/experimental work is prohibited unless there is direct supervision by suitably competent staff.

The SafeZone App must be used by anyone who is lone working or working out-of-hours. Out-of-hours working occurs from 6pm to 10pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm at weekends and during holidays.

- <https://safezoneapp.com/>

The purpose of the Lone Working App is to increase safety and security to isolated individuals within the University. The purpose of the App is not to promote or increase the amount of lone working. An in-lab buddy system is still the safest system for working in remote areas or out of hours.

Table 1 MMBE Risk Categories

Risk Category	Risk	Risk Rating ¹	Work type	Location	Supervisor ² / Buddy ³ Level Required for Access	
A	Low	1 – 2	Desk based/ 3D Printing (loading/unloading FDM prints only)	Office/PC lab/Seminar room	Not required	
B	Low – Medium	3 – 6	Desk based/3D Printing (monitoring)	Laboratory	1 – 5	
C	Medium	8 – 12	Basic Experimental Set-up/Monitoring	Laboratory/ MakerSpace	1 – 4 ²	1 – 5 ³
D	Medium – High	15 – 16	Experimental Set-up/ Manufacturing	Laboratory/ Workshop	1 – 3 ⁴	
E	High	20 – 25	No work permitted, add safety controls to reduce the risks involved.			

Table 2 Lone/Out-of-hours Working Requirements

Risk Category	Approval Required	Risk Assessment ⁵	SafeZone App	Person-Down Device
A	x	x	✓	x
B	✓	✓	✓	x
C	✓	✓	✓	✓
D	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 3 MMBE Access Levels

Level	Position
1	Head of Department, Chief Technical Officer, Department Safety Officer, TBSI Safety Officer
2	Principal Investigator
3	Experimental Officer, Technical Staff, Area Expert
4	Post-Doctoral Researcher
5	Research Assistant, PhD Student
6	MSc/MAI Student
7	Undergraduate Student

¹ Use the [IOSH 5 x 5 Risk Matrix](#) (Figure 1)

² Applies to undergraduate students

³ Applies to postgrads and staff

⁴ Requires weekly approval from Safety Officer

⁵ Refer to the [University Lone Working Policy Rev 1.0](#) (Appendix A) when completing your RA

MMBE Guidance for Lone Working and Out-of-hours Working

- Normal working hours in MMBE are 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.
 - TBSI normal working hours are 7am to 10pm, 7 days per week.
- Out-of-hours access can be granted in Parsons and WATTS buildings from 6pm to 10pm on weekdays and from 10am to 4pm at weekends and holidays.
- All requests for out-of-hours access to TBSI must be approved in advance by the lab manager and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- All labs must be vacated between 10pm-8am on weekdays and from 4pm-10am at weekends and holidays.
- A risk assessment of the intended work must be completed and sent to the Department Safety Officer.⁶
 - This can be part of your project risk assessment.
 - A copy should also be kept by the PI.
- The PI must be informed of the intention to work out of hours, i.e. between 6pm and 10pm in the evening from Monday to Friday and between 10am and 4pm at weekends.
- Approval must be given, with a record of approval (e.g. e-mail) available on request by the Head of Department or Department Safety Officer.⁶
- All equipment RA's and SOP's must be up to date before you commence your work.
- Equipment/Workspace should be booked in advance where possible.
- If you are working in a laboratory with a key-code lock, you must leave the door unlocked while you are in the laboratory.
- The SafeZone App should be used for lone working and out-of-hours working.

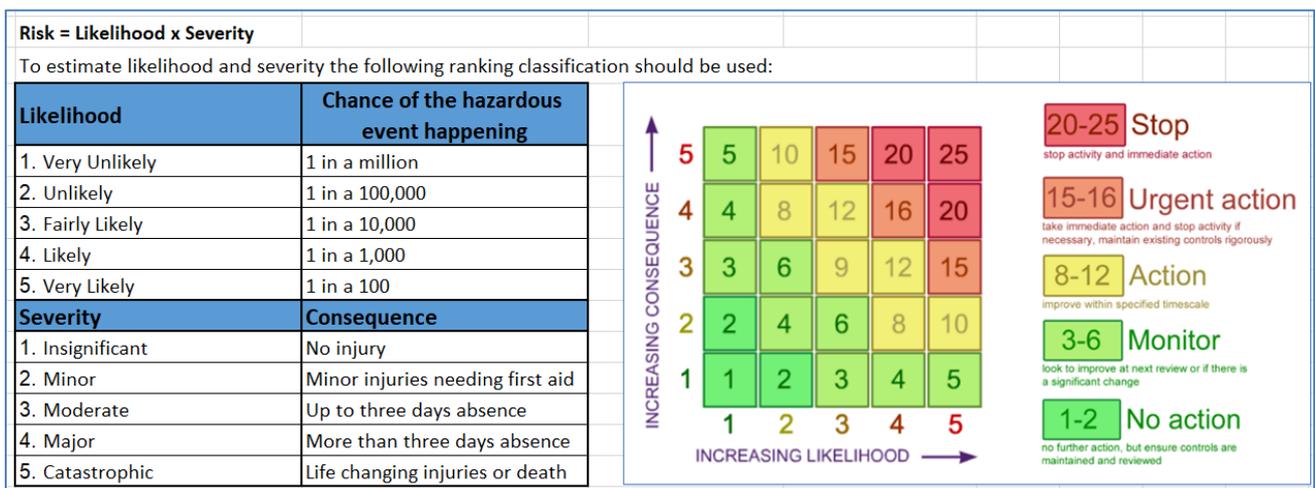


Figure 1 [IOSH Risk Matrix](#)

⁶ TBSI users should contact Simon Carroll