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## **Lone and or Out of Hours Working Procedure**

## **Introduction**

This procedure has been developed to ensure that any lone and or out of hours work that has to take place in Letterkenny Institute of Technology is planned and carried out in safe manner. This procedure document covers all staff and students of LYIT, whether academic or support, research or maintenance and any contractors employed by the Institute. Letterkenny Institute of Technology strongly recommends that in the interest of health, and safety, lone/out of hours work should only be undertaken when absolutely necessary and no other alternatives are available. Please note\* unsupervised and/or out of hours work by undergraduate students is strictly prohibited by each of the Institutes Schools.

## **Scope**

This procedure applies to work in laboratories, kitchens and workshops excluding routine maintenance and cleaning.

## **Definitions**

### ***Work***

For the purposes of this document work is defined as any physical activity undertaken on Institute property for the purposes of upkeep, maintenance, curriculum development, study or research. These activities may involve the use of tools, equipment, chemicals or other materials belonging to the Institute, the individual in question or any other third party.

### ***Worker***

Any person involved in physical activity either for reward or study purposes. This would include among others: students both under graduate and postgraduate, research assistants and post-doctoral researchers, academic supervisors, maintenance and repair persons, academic staff, technical and administrative support staff, and caretakers.

### ***Normal Working Hours for Institute Staff***

8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Friday except public and fixed holidays. On most Saturdays during term time, to facilitate the library, sports centre and project work in the computer rooms the building is open from 10 am to 5 pm

### ***Out of Hours Working***

Out of hours working may be defined as: any work undertaken outside the normal working hours described above and any work undertaken on, Sundays & Bank Holidays.

All buildings must be vacated at closing time which is 10p.m. to facilitate “lock up”. At Christmas and Easter, all buildings will be closed for a specified number of days. Access will only be granted under exceptional circumstances by pre-arrangement

with the Estates Office either on an individual case by case basis or through standing arrangements e.g. Research Building.

### ***Lone Working***

Lone workers are those who work at any time by themselves without close or direct supervision. Anybody who works alone, including contractors, self-employed people and staff, is classed as a lone worker.

## **Employers Responsibility**

Under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 every employer shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees, including lone workers.

In addition section 19 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires the employer to undertake risk assessments to identify the hazards and risks that employees may be exposed to and thereafter implement necessary controls to eliminate or minimise the risk to employees.

If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or backup should be put in place.

## **Out of Hours & Lone workers / Employees responsibility**

The employer holds the main responsibility for protecting the safety and health of lone workers. However, lone workers themselves have a responsibility to help their employer fulfil this duty, and so they must:

- Take reasonable care to look after their own safety and health
- Safeguard the safety and health of other people affected by their work
- Co-operate with their employer's safety and health procedures
- Use tools and other equipment properly, in accordance with any relevant instructions and training they have been given
- Not misuse equipment provided for their safety and health
- Report all accidents, injuries, near-misses and other dangerous occurrences

## **Contractors**

Heads of School and Heads of Function that employ contractors must ensure that contractors provide a detailed written method statement for Lone&/Out of Hours work including detailed risk assessments and permits to work for all staff carrying out Lone&/Out of Hours work. This must be supplied by the contractor and approved by Head of School or Heads of Function before this works take place.

## **Planning for Safe Out of Hours/Lone Working**

Anyone intending to engage in lone or out of hours work must firstly obtain a lone or out of hours working permit from the relevant Head of School or Head of Function. See copy of permit attached.

Heads of School/Function are responsible for approving and planning for out of hours/lone work activities and they should ensure a risk assessment for out of hours/lone working is completed.

Risk Assessment should address the following areas:

- Identify persons at risk i.e. out of hours/lone workers
- Identify the hazards
- Assess the risk
- Put controls in place to eliminate or reduce the risk

**Specific Hazards** that out of hours or lone workers may encounter include, but are not limited to:

- accidents or emergencies arising out of the work, including inadequate provision of first aid
- sudden illnesses
- physical violence from other persons
- hazards from the work activity taking place

### **Examples of control measures to minimise the risk to out of hours/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 strategy is very important: e.g. telephone or sign in with security
- controlled periodic checks
- instruction in proper procedures e.g. code words for potentially violent situations when combined with phone communication to security
- use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- access to first-aid kits and training arrangements
- implementing standard operating procedures (SOP's)
- implementing correct incident reporting procedures
- informing estates & security staff of out of hours work being planned
- emergency preparedness e.g. fire safety, evacuation procedure, contact details

**Issues to be considered when planning safe working arrangements for out of hours/lone workers:**

*1. Can this activity take place during normal working hours as defined above?*

*2. 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, 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 risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?

*3. 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 opinion if necessary.

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

Training is important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and precautions fully. Heads of School/Function should set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone. They should ensure staff are competent to deal with circumstances that are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training.

*5. 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. Supervision of safety and health can often be carried out when checking the progress of the work; it may take the form of periodic visits by Heads of School/Function 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. The level of supervision required is a Head of School/Function decision, which should be based on the findings of risk assessment, i.e. the higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required.

For further information on Out of Hours/Lone working please see appendix 1.



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### LONE OR OUT OF HOURS WORKING PERMIT

*This form is to be completed by the Head of School/ Function for each person required to do Lone or Out of Hours Work.*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Name of Approved Person:</b>                |  |
| <b>School or Functional Area:</b>              |  |
| <b>Purpose of Work:</b>                        |  |
| <b>Exact Location Where Work Will Be Done:</b> |  |
| <b>Specified Hours:</b>                        |  |
| <b>Duration Requested/Dates:</b>               |  |
| <b>LYIT Contact Number:</b>                    |  |

| <b>Listing of Authorised Activities</b> | <b>Risk Rating</b><br>(High, Medium or Low) | <b>Buddy Required Y/N</b> |
|---|---|---------------------------|
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#### CHECKLIST

For out of hours or lone working operations

- Risk Assessment completed for Lone Working or Out of Hours Work?
- Is a personal alarm required?
- Are other work permits required (e.g. hot works, etc.)
- Have Estates & Security been notified time and location of work?
- Point of entry: \_\_\_\_\_
- Escape routes: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other requirements Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY CONTACT NO.S** \_\_\_\_\_

|   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| Please sign to indicate that you are medically fit for lone work and or out of hours work:  |   | Date: |
| Signature of person undertaking lone or out of hours working:   |   | Date: |
| Access approved by Estates (& Security):  |   | Date: |
| Duration of access granted:   | From: _____ To: _____   |       |
| <b><u>Approval by Head of Function or School</u></b><br><i>I approve that _____, be given permission for out of hours access or lone working. I have discussed the work and completed a risk assessment for the task(s) involved.</i> | <b>Signature by Head of Function or School</b><br><br>Name: _____ Date: _____ |       |

## **Appendix 1 – Further information**

**The following are useful for reference and guidance for this procedure:**

- Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 – S.I. No. 10 of 2005
- HSA Website - [http://www.hsa.ie/eng/FAQs/Lone\\_Workers/](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/FAQs/Lone_Workers/)
- Working Alone in Safety – Controlling the Risks of Solitary Work HSE – 1998