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### **PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines for working alone. For further guidance refer to SBMS: "Work Alone"  
<http://sbms.pnl.gov/standard/06/0601d010.htm>

### **APPLICABILITY**

This practice applies to all whose work in the RTL Facility presents a hazard and takes them out of eyesight and hearing of other staff for more than a few minutes.

### **HAZARDS**

**SUSTAINING AN ILLNESS OR INJURY THAT PRECLUDES SELF-RESCUE**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Working alone is considered to be the performance of any work function by an individual who is not within hearing or sight range of another individual for more than a few minutes at a time. The major concerns when working alone are: an injury or illness that incapacitates an individual, a person becomes trapped or finds themselves in a position that they can't release themselves, or there is an increased potential of injury which would require immediate rescue and/or first aid. This practice identifies the suggested guidelines for mitigating potential risks.

### **GOOD PRACTICES**

The extent of the risk assessment and method of mitigation depends on the type of work being performed. In general, the line manager should discuss the work situation with staff, review operations that could be considered higher than normal risk for staff working alone, and address hazard mitigation.

Whenever practical, limit the situations in which staff may incur higher than normal risks when working alone. Some of the methods for achieving this are as follows:

- Schedule work activities to limit the time staff spend working alone in the lab or other workspace.
- Develop procedures that are specific to risks that could be considered higher than normal for staff working alone.
- Preplan jobs to reduce risks that could be considered higher than normal for staff working alone.

Special consideration should be given to personnel with medical or other conditions that could increase their risk of working alone.

When conducting work that is considered higher than normal risk, have a communications plan and method in place. Elements of the communications plan, which should reflect the level of hazard, may include:

- Periodic checks between staff working alone and staff at a designated location.
- Walk-by or call-in checks by security or other staff on location.
- Procedure for emergency response.
- Use of a buddy system.
- The duties of the second person.

When planning to work alone and conduct operations that are considered higher than normal risk, the CSM for the space should be contacted and informed prior to performing the work. If unsure whether the planned work is higher than normal risk, staff should discuss with the CSM and determine the appropriate risk.

Examples of situations where working alone should be evaluated include:

- Working on exposed energized electrical equipment > 50 Volts (A second person may be warranted to perform rescue in the event accidental contact is made with the conductor. The second person should not be exposed to the same hazard.)
- Working with chemicals that may create toxic fumes that can be lethal or cause asphyxiation.
- Using fall-arrest equipment (if the person should fall, they may not be able to recover on their own).