

GRAND VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY POLICY

PERSONNEL

Date of Revision/Approval : September 8, 2010

Chair signature:

Working Alone

Applicable Legislation:

Occupational Health and Safety Act, (OHSA).

Intent: To ensure appropriate supervisory due diligence and to promote safe work procedures for the health and safety of persons working alone.

Requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)

Duties of employers/supervisors:

- (a) Provide information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker;
- (b) Acquaint a worker or a person in authority over a worker with any hazard in the work and in the handling, storage, use, disposal and transport of any article, device, equipment.
- (c) Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.
- (d) Where so prescribed, provide a worker with written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for protection of the worker.

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Definitions:

Accident *an incident that results in personal injury or property damage.*

Buddy system *a system of organizing employees in work groups so that each employee of the work group is designated to be observed by at least one other employee in the work group.*

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<i>Critical injury</i>	<i>an injury of a serious nature that places life in jeopardy, produces unconsciousness, results in substantial loss of blood, involves fractures or amputations, burns to major portions of the body or loss of sight.</i>
<i>Incident</i>	<i>an unplanned event.</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>a documented plan of prescribed safe work procedures to prevent accidents and minimize misfortune.</i>
<i>Worker</i>	<i>includes employees, students and persons in an unpaid status who are performing authorized work under the supervision of an employee.</i>
<i>Working alone</i>	<i>those work situations where an employee is nor directly supervised and, in the event of critical injury, health impairment, victimization, or other foreseeable life-threatening emergency, assistance is not readily available.</i>

Working Alone

Policy:

1. Working alone situations shall be identified and assessed co-operatively by supervisors and their employees.
2. Working alone safety procedures shall be documented and reviewed annually. The procedures shall identify the occupational hazards, procedures for personal safety, and the procedures for reporting and securing emergency assistance in the event of an incident.
3. Copies of working alone safety procedures shall be provided by supervisors to the employees who are required to work alone.
4. Supervisors shall provide on-going training and instruction to employees for their working alone situations.

Guidelines:

Many jobs have working alone situations. Employees and their supervisors must work together to develop safe work procedures. It is essential that the working conditions or circumstances that present high foreseeable personal safety risks be assessed so the probability of misfortune can be minimized.

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Supervisors and employees must evaluate together work alone situations and must consider the following risk factors for working alone:

- a) Tasks and associated hazards involved in the work to be performed;
- b) Consequences resulting from a “worst case” scenario;
- c) Possibility that a critical injury or incident could prevent the employee from calling for help or leaving the workplace;
- d) Emergency response time;
- e) Worker’s training and experience’
- f) Worker’s physical handicaps or medical conditions;
- g) The time or shift when on the job
- h) Whether the worker is accustomed to working alone.

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Supervisors shall provide written working alone safety procedures for the safety and security of persons working alone. Safety procedures shall include:

- a) Identification of the risks or hazards in the environment where the work is to be done.
- b) Procedures to eliminate or minimize the identified risks.
- c) Methods of communication by which workers can secure emergency assistance, and how emergency assistance will be provided in the event of incidents or accidents.
- d) Confirmation where and when working alone is permitted.
- e) Promote dialogue about working-alone and personal safety issues.

Working Alone Procedures

Overview: Working alone situations may occur in the following situations.

- Staff may work alone on a regular basis
- Staff may also find themselves in working alone situations when :
 - Coming into work early or working late;
 - Coming into work to empty the drop box
 - Engaged in outreach
 - In transit to a meeting

Staff who come into work early or stay late should notify their supervisor in advance. Staff working alone should have their supervisor’s permission and should check in with a co-worker. The potential hazards that might arise while working alone are accidents (automobile accidents, slips, trips and falls), fire, health issues (illness, choking) and the risk from other people.

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Rationale:

Recognizing that working alone may be a higher than normal risk activity every reasonable step will be taken to minimize this risk.

Staff Member Responsible: All Library Staff

Procedures:

To address the hazards from working alone the following measures have been put into place.

- Working alone requires you to take charge of your own personal safety. Set up a “fail safe” check back plan. Inform your spouse or friend about your work location and when you will return. If you are working alone during closed hours keep the doors locked.
- When leaving the building, scan the parking lot and make sure that it is safe to exit.
- Phone the Municipality to deal with maintenance issues, the lack of snow removal or burnt out exterior lights.
- Carry your car keys in your hand. You can use them to set off the alarm in your car.
- Park close to the building.
- Check your car to make sure that no one is in the back seat or under your car.
- Think about your escape route.
- Discuss any safety/security concerns with your supervisor. Staff have a right to refuse unsafe work.
- Complete an incident report after a situation where you felt unsafe so this issue can be addressed.