



THE UNIVERSITY
of **EDINBURGH**

The University of Edinburgh

**College of Medicine and Veterinary
Medicine**

Western General Hospital Site

Royal Edinburgh Hospital Site

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Out of Hours Work

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Aim

To define what constitutes “hours of expected building occupancy”, and describe procedures intended to identify, manage, control and minimise the risks arising from working outside of these hours.

Introduction

It is acknowledged that, for a variety of legitimate reasons, not all work within University buildings on the WGH/REH sites can be done entirely within what are defined by the University as “hours of expected building occupancy”. There is a need, therefore, for special measures to be laid down for the welfare, security and protection of people who remain present or enter buildings when most others have left at the end of the normal working day (including many of those trained as fire wardens first aiders etc.).

This section specifies who shall be allowed access to University buildings on the sites outside hours of expected buildings occupancy and what work is expressly prohibited at such times. This section also describes special arrangements for working outside hours of expected building occupancy.

Lone Working refers to the situation where a person may be working in relative isolation from other building users regardless of whether that work is being done within or outside of hours of expected building occupancy.

Definition of Hours of Expected Building Occupancy

These are defined by for University buildings on the WGH/REH sites as all except:

- Weekdays from 18.00 until 07.00 the following day (excepting weekends)
- Weekends (from 18.00 on Friday until 07.00 on Monday)
- Any day on which a University building will normally be closed (for example, on a University or Public Holiday)

Policy

In line with the University's Health and Safety Policies, any work that entails a potential risk of serious personal injury, fire or other significant hazard, which it is proposed will be undertaken by persons working alone and/or outside hours of expected building occupancy (i.e. generally in the evenings or at weekends), is effectively prohibited at all such times ("High Risk" Activities lists a number of activities that are prohibited outside hours of expected building occupancy).

Work that is expressly prohibited outside hours of expected buildings occupancy (see "High Risk" Activities and also any relevant local rules) must instead take place when the building is more fully occupied (i.e. within hours of expected building occupancy), with all essential control measures (including formal risk assessments, safe systems of work and approvals), all relevant safety-trained staff, and all necessary emergency procedures in place.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for some work to be undertaken that would usually be prohibited outside hours of expected building occupancy, providing that special measures are first put in place to provide a level of control that is at least equivalent to that which would apply during "normal working hours"; this will be permitted only on a case-by-case basis after first obtaining the prior approval of the relevant Principal Investigator, the Convenor of relevant local Health & Safety Committee (see **Safety Roles and Responsibilities**) and the Health and Safety Manager for University buildings on WGH/REH sites.

Implementation

All laboratory-based activities should be carried out as far as possible within "hours of expected building occupancy" (see definition in Definition of Hours of Expected Building Occupancy), and with an appropriate complement of suitably experienced staff present within the area.

The first requirement, in formally assessing the risk associated with late working, will be for the Principal Investigator to judge whether late working is necessary at all. In many cases, adjustment of working patterns during the normal working day will enable workers to have access to equipment that otherwise may be thought most likely to be available only after hours of expected building occupancy, when most colleagues (including many of those trained to provide emergency support e.g. Fire Wardens, First Aiders etc.) have left the building. A late-working risk assessment template and a guidance document are available at:

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/ra/LOOH_RA.doc

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/ra/LOOH_notes.pdf

Only when alternatives have been explored and rejected as completely impractical, and a formal risk assessment for late working has been completed and signed by the Principal Investigator and each prospective lone worker, with all necessary control measures having been put in place, should authorisation be given for a person to work late within a building.

The formal risk assessment for late working prepared by the Principal Investigator, and signed also by each prospective late worker, must not conflict with the policy and procedures described in this Section and in **Lone Working**.

The presence of NHS security officers, who patrol on WGH/REH sites, do not constitute sufficiently regular contact with staff and students to warrant late working without other more substantial arrangements having been put in place.

Any person working anywhere within one of the University buildings on the WGH/REH sites outside of hours of expected building occupancy must follow established local rules and policies.

No worker will be permitted to use radioisotopes, infectious organisms or genetically modified organisms, alone, out of hours of expected building occupancy, or at any other time, without first having attended the relevant University training courses.

Access to liquid nitrogen plant rooms outside hours of expected buildings occupancy should be done on an exceptional basis only (having planned wherever possible to do such work during normal weekday working hours), but all standing rules governing the mandatory 'buddy system', use of personal protective equipment, and security of the room, remain wholly and fully in force during late working hours. Lone working is not permitted in liquid nitrogen plant rooms under any circumstances at all.

Workers are encouraged to inform their supervisor of any illness or condition that they might have (e.g. pregnancy, epilepsy, diabetes, mental health problems etc.) and which might have a bearing on their safety to work, regardless of the time that work will be undertaken.

Having been granted authorisation to work alone within any local area, the worker will be expected still to conform to all relevant generic and local rules governing health and safety.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ANYONE WORKING OUTSIDE OF "HOURS OF EXPECTED BUILDING OCCUPANCY" OR WORKING ALONE IS COMPLETELY FAMILIAR WITH AND WILL ALWAYS COMPLY WITH EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency procedures outside hours of expected building occupancy are essentially the same as for those during normal working hours, but those authorising or proposing to conduct work outside hours of normal building occupancy must take account of the likelihood that few if any of the safety support staff present in the building during the normal working day (first aiders, fire wardens etc.), will be present within the building when work is being done outside hours of normal building occupancy.

In such cases, fire safety considerations should form part of the late and lone working risk assessment that must be done before working outside hours of expected building occupancy or **Lone Working** can be authorised.

Staff present within the building outside of hours of expected building occupancy should evacuate as they would during the normal working day (see **Fire Safety Procedures** and **Mobility Impairment and Building Emergencies** for details).

It is particularly important that the person raising an alarm outside hours of expected building occupancy should report personally to Fire and Rescue Service personnel arriving on-site to apprise them of the circumstances and location of a building emergency. Lothian & Borders Fire and Rescue Service will usually go first to the location of the main local fire alarm monitoring panels.

“High Risk” Activities

The following activities should not normally be done outside of hours of expected building occupancy, unless (exceptionally) with the explicit approval of the relevant Principal Investigator, taking into account the number of people available to carry out the tasks, and to supervise it, and their respective levels of experience:

- Laboratory-based activities where the risk assessment and/or local rules state explicitly that it is not safe for the work to be done outside hours of expected building occupancy or without a full complement of appropriately experienced staff to carry out the task and supervise it
- Entry to a liquid nitrogen plant room, except when a “buddy system is in operation” (see **Special Safety Precautions**)
- Any work with radioactive substances that by definition requires to be managed in a Controlled Area – see Special Safety Precautions
- Manually handling hazardous or especially awkward loads, e.g. moving compressed gas cylinders – see **Manual Handling**
- Setting up a fumigation procedure
- Work involving flammable solvents (volumes greater than 200ml)
- Work involving use of a Bunsen burner (or equivalent)
- Work involving entering the Controlled Area of the biomedical MRI. (Work on an out-of-hours or lone working basis entailing use of the biomedical MRI will be permitted, subject to standing arrangements described in Implementation and in Lone Work, only if a lone worker does not enter the Controlled Area. Further guidance will be found in local rules for the biomedical MRI.

Attention is drawn also to “High Risk” Activities **Lone Working**, which lists activities that are prohibited on a lone working basis regardless of time of day or day or the week.

Attention is drawn also to any and all local rules that may exist for a laboratory, which may impose further restrictions (e.g. prohibition of ultracentrifugation outside hours of expected buildings occupancy, on the basis that there is increased risk of damage accruing from incorrectly set-up centrifuges if these cannot be checked first by a competent worker).

Further information: General information on out-of-hours working appears on the University’s Health and Safety website:

<http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/Policy/Part1.pdf> (Paragraph 4.10)

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