


Facilities Management
Working Alone in Laboratories Standard Operating Procedures

SOP #:	EHS-020	Revision: 1
Dept:	Environmental Health and Safety	Date: 03/11/19
Approval:		Date: 03/11/19

1. PURPOSE

Working alone in any laboratory creates increased risk to the health and safety of laboratory personnel. Such risks include not having access to basic first aid and the possibility of being unable to notify emergency response. *Prudent Practices in the Laboratory* by the National Research Council states “Generally it is prudent to avoid working alone at the bench in a laboratory building. Experiments known to be hazardous should not be undertaken by a worker who is alone in the laboratory.”

CSU-Pueblo is actively concerned with the safety of all faculty, staff, students and guests on the CSU-Pueblo campus. Safety can only be effectively achieved with the cooperation of the entire campus community. This guideline is established to enhance the safety and health of faculty, staff, and students as they conduct laboratory work in a safe manner.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.A. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) will be responsible for:

2.A.1. Assisting Principal Investigators in developing safe laboratory procedures with emphasis during times of limited occupancy.

2.B. All CSU-Pueblo Department Chairs will be responsible for:

2.B.1. Ensuring all Principal Investigators are developing safe laboratory procedures with special precautions for times of limited occupancy.

2.C. All CSU-Pueblo Principal Investigators (PI) will be responsible for:

2.C.1. Ensuring procedures for working in laboratories during times of limited occupancy are developed and are followed by personnel working in laboratories under their supervision.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.A. LIMITED OCCUPANCY – Any time research is completed outside of normal work hours when few people are available in the building for emergency assistance.

4. PROCEDURES

4.A. The following laboratory tasks should never be conducted when alone:

4.A.1. Procedures involving toxic or hazardous chemicals.

4.A.2. Procedures involving high-pressure equipment.

4.A.3. Procedures involving cryogenic materials.

4.A.4. Transferring large quantities of hazardous materials.

4.B. Following the guidelines below will aid in protecting the health and safety of laboratory personnel, while minimizing risks associated with working in laboratories during times of limited occupancy, such as evenings, weekends, or holidays.

4.B.1. Laboratory personnel must obtain permission from the principal investigator (PI) or responsible faculty member prior to working in a laboratory during times of limited occupancy.

4.B.2. Principal investigators and responsible faculty should establish specific guidelines and develop notification procedures when working in laboratories during times of limited occupancy.

4.B.3. Laboratory procedures should be discussed, and hazardous operations should be identified prior to permitting lab personnel to work alone.

4.B.4. Laboratory personnel and supervising faculty should establish and maintain a weekly work schedule and minimize the opportunities when laboratory personnel are alone in the lab.

4.B.5. A telephone must be immediately available to the individual working alone. Contact CSU-Pueblo Sheriff's Office at 911 in the event of any emergency.

4.B.6. Another individual capable of providing on-site assistance should be accessible in the event of an emergency.

4.C. If there are any questions or concerns related to working alone in a laboratory, please contact EHS at 719-549-2747.