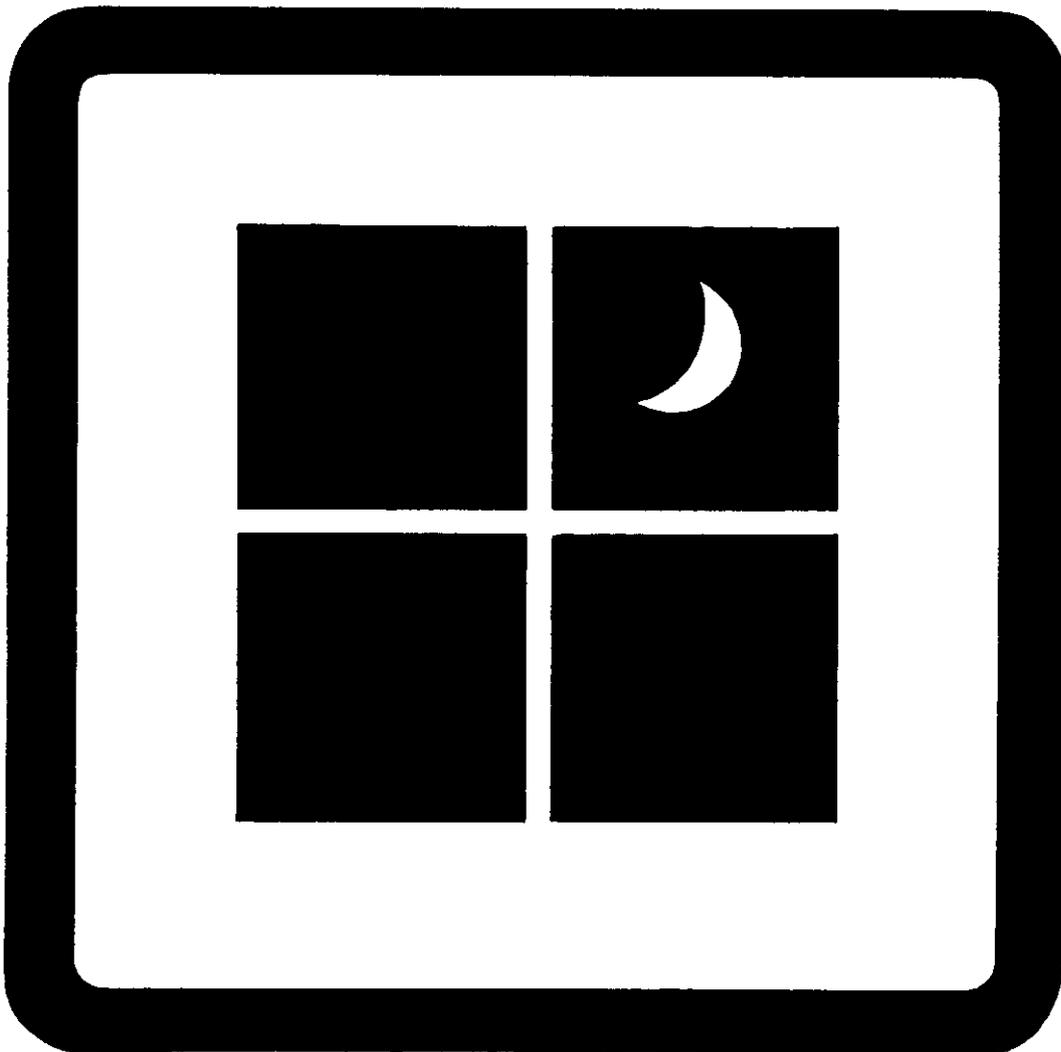


Safety Code of Practice 7

5th Edition, March 2009

OUTSIDE NORMAL WORKING HOURS



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1 SUMMARY

No-one should work or study alone on University premises where such activities involve a significant risk of injury, ill-health, fire, personal security risk or other emergency. In practice this means outside normal working hours when other people will not be available to provide assistance. Normal working hours are defined as between 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday. All other times are outside normal working hours, including evenings, nights, weekends, public holidays and University closure days. Schools/Directorates/ Units must ensure that arrangements are in place to limit the range of activities that can be undertaken outside normal working hours to those that do not involve significant risk for staff or students. They must, additionally, ensure that building users are aware of the University emergency procedures.

Procedures must be in place to:

- Define normal working hours for the building/function (if different to the above);
- Maintain adequate staffing and service levels during normal working hours, appropriate to the activities carried out and the level of risk;
- Risk assess any work activities that take place outside normal working hours;
- Limit activities to those that do not involve significant or high risk, or otherwise ensure that effective assistance is available to manage any foreseeable incident or emergency;
- Provide staff and students, and if necessary third parties including contractors, with information on procedures for out of hours working, including any restrictions placed on activities and emergency procedures. NB This can be achieved by inclusion in the Area Health and Safety Code (for staff and students) or in contract conditions or conditions of booking for external third parties such as conferences;
- Identify individuals who may be at risk due to pre-existing medical conditions, ill-health or disability ('at risk' persons), and ensure that either they do not work outside normal working hours, or that trained assistance is available to help in the event of a foreseeable incident;
- Where practicable, record the presence and location of staff/students in a building so that emergency services and University Security can locate them should an emergency, such as fire, occur, or if they need to be located for any other reason such as a domestic crisis;

This guide mainly applies to activities undertaken in the course of work (staff) or practical classes undertaken by students. It also applies to business activities of the University, such as conferences. However it is recognised that some buildings may be used out-of-hours by students attending clubs/societies or engaged in private study. It is also recognised that centrally-booked facilities may be used by any member of the University or by third parties out of hours. Where facilities and buildings are used in this way, those in control of the premises and those responsible for accepting room bookings (e.g. Central Room Bookings, Conference Office) must ensure that:

- Building users are informed of the fire and emergency procedures that apply to them;
- Arrangements are made to ensure the safety of 'at risk' persons. NB This responsibility is shared with the School/Directorate/Unit of which the 'at risk' member of staff or student is a member;

There is adequate security or supervision to protect staff, students and property.

2 SCOPE

This Safety Guide sets out what managers, staff, students and tenants have to do to ensure their safety and that of others who may work in or visit University premises outside normal working hours. Normal working hours in academic buildings are generally defined as 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday.

All other times are considered outside normal working hours, including evenings, nights, weekends, public holidays and University closure days. However the normal hours of work for some buildings or service functions may vary. Therefore area managements are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the normal working hours for their unit or building, and for maintaining adequate staffing and service levels during such periods.

There are two main concerns associated with activities on University premises outside normal working hours. They are:

- To reduce the risk of a person being injured or falling ill and not being found or receiving timely assistance;
- To ensure that persons who are in the premises outside normal working hours know what to do in the event of an emergency e.g. fire.

Guidance:

Safety Guide 6 covers fire evacuation procedures in detail, and should be referred to. This Guide summarises the key points.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Duties on managers

Heads of Schools/Directorates/Halls/Units and other managers must ensure that:

- All their staff and students are aware of the hours which are considered "outside normal working hours". This can be achieved by e.g. including information in the Area Health and Safety Code;
- Where staff/ students work out of hours, they are aware of, and comply with, any limitations placed on work/activities;
- Where staff/ students are allowed access to buildings out of hours that they are aware of the emergency procedures for the building i.e. fire evacuation.

3.2 Duties of persons occupying a University building outside of normal working hours

All staff, students and other building occupants e.g. tenants and members of the public, who are in buildings outside of normal working hours must ensure that they are aware of:

- What the fire alarm sounds like;
- The evacuation routes;
- The location of fire alarm call points;
- The location of telephones;
- First aid arrangements.

They must comply with the emergency procedures and any restrictions placed on activities outside normal working hours. They must inform their School/Directorate if they have any medical or health problem or disability that could place them at additional risk when lone working out of hours, or which would mean that they require assistance to evacuate. Further information is given in section 3.3.

4 ARRANGEMENTS FOR WORKING OUTSIDE NORMAL WORKING HOURS

4.1 High and low risk work

"High risk work" is activities that by their nature could lead to personal injury or fire. "Low risk work" denotes activities that under normal circumstances does not present an inherent risk of injury or fire. Decisions on what activities constitute high or low risk work must be taken as part of the risk assessment process in consultation with the Area Health and Safety Co-ordinator and Head of School/Directorate/Unit. Examples of high and low risk work are given in Appendix 1.

4.1.1 High risk work

The minimum requirement for carrying out high risk work on University premises outside normal working hours is that there must be at least one other responsible person within calling distance who can monitor the safety of the person doing the work i.e. occasional checks may be required, rather than relying on a person being able to call for help. Ideally high risk work will be conducted in pairs. This is mandatory where immediate emergency assistance may be required.

4.1.2 Low risk work

Low risk work can be carried out alone by a responsible person. This includes, but is no limited to, office administration.

4.2 Responsible persons

Responsible persons are defined as:

- A member of academic, academically-related or technical staff;
- A postgraduate student who is approved to work outside normal working hours by his/her supervisor.

4.3 Undergraduates

Undergraduate students may only undertake low risk activities out of hours with the prior approval of the Head of School/Department/Unit. Where appropriate, they must have received all necessary training.

Significant or higher risk activities may only be carried out by undergraduate students out of hours if:

- The activity has been risk assessed;

- All necessary control measures are put in place, including training and emergency arrangements;
- The proposed activity is approved in advance by the Head of School/Department;
- The activity is supervised by responsible persons, to the same extent as would apply during normal working hours.

4.4 'At risk' building users

Anyone with a pre-existing, known medical condition that might cause them to be incapacitated while working alone must not work outside normal working hours without assistance being readily available. They should make their condition known to their School/Directorate management (e.g. supervisor or Area Health and Safety Co-ordinator) so that medical advice can be sought and to agree suitable working arrangements.

Anyone with a disability that means that they would require assistance to evacuate a building in the event of an emergency must bring this to the attention of their School/Directorate management (e.g. Area Health and Safety Co-ordinator, Disability Officer, as appropriate) and the building management so that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) can be agreed. Further information on PEEPs is given in Safety Note 28.

Guidance:

1. Conditions that may place people at risk may include e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, severe heart disease. Advice should be sought from Occupational Health where the person at risk is a member of staff. An individual risk assessment should be undertaken in all cases. Medical confidentiality should be maintained.
2. The University will do all that is reasonably practicable to enable all staff and students to have equal access to facilities out of hours. However in a small range of circumstances where it is not reasonably practicable to provide essential emergency cover or assistance, access may have to be restricted.

4.5 Non-work activities

It is recognised that some University premises are open to staff, students and members of the public for non-work activities e.g. private study, use computer laboratories, or participation in social events associated with student clubs. In these circumstances it is impractical to operate procedures such as signing in and out, or to expect the building to be staffed at the same level as during normal working hours. It is therefore essential that those in control of the premises and those responsible for accepting room bookings (e.g. Central Room Bookings, Conference Office) ensure that:

- Building users are informed of the emergency and fire procedures;
- Arrangements are made to ensure the safety of 'at risk' persons. NB This responsibility is shared with the School/Directorate/Unit of which the 'at risk' member of staff or student is a member;
- There is adequate security or supervision to protect staff, students and property.

University non-residential premises are not designed for sleeping overnight and may not have the necessary fire precautions that are required for sleeping accommodation. Therefore sleeping overnight in non-residential buildings is not permitted.

4.6 Building Occupants Register

Every person working in academic, administrative or support buildings outside normal hours periods - including cleaning staff, maintenance engineers attending a breakdown, etc - must register their presence in a building in a book or blackboard kept in the main entrance/foyer area of the building. The location of the book or board must be clearly signed. The book or board must at least detail:

- The date;
- The name of the person;
- Building location (i.e. room(s) number(s));
- Signing-in time;
- Anticipated departure time; and
- Signing-out time.

Periodic checks must be made by area managements to check that the signing-in and signing-out procedures are being adhered to.

It is not necessary for people attending departmental functions such as research seminars, plays, etc to sign in and sign out. However, the organiser of the function or event safety controller must know what action to take in the event of an emergency, such as fire (Safety Guide 6) or injury (Safety Guide 8), and must take responsibility for the safety of persons attending the function.

Classrooms and any other room which are being used outside of normal working hours (apart from individual offices) must contain information about the emergency procedures to be followed. Confirmation of room bookings issued by Central Room Bookings or Conference Office should be accompanied by information about the emergency fire procedures.

The University Security (securitycontrol@reading.ac.uk, or extension 7799) should be informed well in advance of any event outside normal hours that may involve visitors to the campus, potential vehicle parking problems, etc. (See Safety Guide 33, Event Management).

4.7 Phone in and out procedures

In some areas it may not be practicable to set up signing-in and signing-out procedures. In such circumstances a phone-in/phone-out system should be implemented. This can be arranged with the University Security Office (extension 7799). The person carrying out the work phones in to the University Security Control (extension 7799) (or Reading 0118 931 6300 if calling from outside the University) prior to commencing work quoting name, location and anticipated time of departure to the Security Control Duty Controller. Upon completion of the work a phone out call is made stating that the work has been completed safely. If the phone out call is not received by the previously declared time a security patrolman will check the work area.

This system cannot be used at the University farms or other work locations off campus. In these circumstances equivalent arrangements should be made with responsible colleagues, and an agreed action plan developed in the event of the worker failing to phone at the agreed time.

4.8 Building security

Persons who are in a building not open to the public outside normal work hours must not admit unknown or unauthorised persons into the building. If in doubt, the University Security Control Centre should be alerted (extension 6300). Care must also be taken to ensure that external doors are locked following entry and exit, and keys are not left in the locks. Any signs of suspicious

behaviour, attempted break-ins, etc should be reported to Security Control (extension 6300) immediately.

4.8.1 Security of hazardous areas and equipment

Unauthorised access to areas containing hazardous substances or high risk equipment must be prevented at all times, including out of hours. This includes e.g. laboratories, workshops. Additionally, power supplies to high risk equipment such as printing presses, power saws, lathes, drills must be locked off.

4.9 Personal security

It is good practice for anyone working outside normal working hours to make this known to family/partners/friends at home, and to give them contact details for the University e.g. Security Control (extension 6300). If there is concern that the worker has failed to arrive home, contact should be made with Security Control so that the worker's location can be checked.

Anyone who is concerned about their personal safety on campus outside normal hours work should contact Security Control (extension 7799).

4.10 Lifts

All University passenger lifts are equipped with emergency phones that automatically alert Security Control when lifted. Under no circumstances must anyone attempt to free someone (including themselves) from a lift – this is highly dangerous. Safety Note 41 provides instructions on what to do in the event of a lift breakdown, and notices are posted in all passenger lifts.

4.11 Telephones

Buildings should have internal phones readily accessible for contacting the emergency services/ Security Control (ext 6300). Anyone phoning the emergency services direct must always contact University Security so that they are aware of where to direct the emergency services when they arrive on campus.

4.12 First Aid

Appropriate first aid facilities must be available and accessible outside normal working hours. Further guidance is given in Safety Guide 8.

4.13 Equipment left running unattended

Equipment may only be left running unattended outside normal hours providing it is reasonably safe to do so and a completed "Please Leave Running" notice is attached to the outside of the main door to the laboratory or workshop. This notice must provide information on how to safely shut down the equipment if an emergency arises, and details the names, home addresses and telephone numbers of the persons responsible for the equipment, so that they can be contacted if necessary. This requirement does not apply to low risk equipment, such as refrigerators, incubators, videotape units, computer systems, etc. that are normally left running. However, the power isolation point(s) must be clearly visible and/or appropriately labelled.

All equipment that is left running unattended must be designed and constructed to "fail-to-safety" if sudden loss of mains services - water, gas or electricity - should occur. Care must also be taken to avoid dangerous situations developing when lost services are restored. For example, mains gas failure may extinguish a flame and when the gas supply is restored a leakage of gas may occur. Similarly loss of cooling water to equipment may cause serious overheating and fire if the equipment is not protected by an isolation trip-switch in the electricity supply that is activated by loss of water flow.

Precautions must be taken to avoid flooding caused by faults in water cooling circuits e.g. perished hoses, etc. Such precautions include regular inspection of all water circuit components, replacement of perished or corroded sections, and the use of materials that are not likely to be subject to rapid deterioration. The emergency instructions must identify the possibility of flood water - or other conductive solutions – penetrating electrical circuits and the fact that the electrical supply must be isolated before entering to begin any remedial work (see Safety Guide 11). A residual current device (RCD or RCCB or ELCB) circuit breaker should be added to the supply circuit of areas where there is a possibility of floods producing an electrical hazard.

Guidance:

For business continuity and quality assurance reasons, Schools/Directorates should also consider the need to protect valuable equipment/resources against loss of power, cooling water etc. Further advice on this is available for the University Business Continuity Manager.

4.14 Contractors

Where it is necessary for contractors to work out of hours, the person contracting the work on behalf of the University must instruct the contractor(s) not to work alone on high risk activities, and to sign-in and sign-out in the Building Occupants Register. They must be told of any residual risks within the building, the location(s) of emergency phone(s) and the action they must take in an emergency. Arrangements for the provision of first aid and supervision must be agreed.

5 FURTHER ADVICE AND INFORMATION

Further advice can be obtained from Health and Safety Services – extn. 8888.

Appendix 1: Examples of significant and low risk work

Significant and high risk work

Examples of significant or high risk work include operations involving the use of:

- Flammable, toxic, corrosive or unstable chemicals, radioactive substances, human pathogens and laboratory animals;
- Vacuum lines, distillation and refluxing equipment, centrifuges, autoclaves, steam plant, high pressure equipment and gas cylinders;
- High voltage equipment;
- Lasers, X-ray and UV sources;
- Workshop machinery, such as lathes, pillar drills, milling machines, band and circular saws, power presses, power guillotines, printing presses, etc.;
- Gas (and arc) welding, brazing and cutting equipment;
- Dangerous animals or animal products, such as dusts, venoms, etc. and
- Cryo-liquids;

or activities such as:

- Working on exposed live conductors operating at greater than 50V AC or 120 V DC;
- Servicing fume extraction plant;
- Winding lift gear (must not be carried out unaccompanied);
- Working in restricted or confined spaces e.g. underground work in service ducts etc.;
- Changing and sharpening microtome blades;
- Working at height.

Low risk work

Examples of low risk work are:

- Office work, reading, writing, drawing and marking;
- The use of microscopes;
- Feeding and maintenance of small harmless animals;
- Routine plant examination and adjustments; and

Building cleaning operations in non-hazardous areas, such as corridors, foyers, toilets, etc.

Appendix 2: Version control

VERSION	KEEPER	REVIEWED	APPROVED BY	APPROVAL DATE
X.X	H&S	Every four years	XXXXX	XX/XX/XX
X.X	H&S	Annually	XXXXX	XX/XX/XX