University of Reading

Safety Code of Practice 07   **6th Edition, Nov 2022**

OUTSIDE NORMAL WORKING HOURS

Summary		
This code of practice summarises the requirements for activities outside normal working hours.		

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1   INTRODUCTION

Flexible working hours are a valuable and necessary component of the University's operation, especially in facilitating research work. However potentially hazardous situations can arise when working outside normal hours (ONH), i.e. that period when occupancy levels are much reduced from the usual daytime level and the normal support infrastructure for dealing with problems might not be available.

Working ONH will not usually pose an increased health and safety risk. However there may be worse outcomes from incidents occurring due to the limitations of systems or procedures to cope with an emergency. There may also be personal security issues if working in isolated areas.

2   SCOPE

This Code of Practice 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 ONH. The aim is to raise awareness of the hazards that may be associated with working ONH and to advise Schools, Departments and Functions on the factors to be considered in assessing working ONH situations in order to minimise the risks and provide a safe working environment as far as is reasonably practicable.

This Code of Practice applies to all buildings on Whiteknights and London Road campuses and temporary structures, glasshouses, chemical and waste stores. Hall Farm, Sonning Farm and Greenlands are 24 hour commercial businesses so their normal working hours will be locally defined and risk assessments covering their activities will reflect this.

3   DEFINITIONS

The University does not define 'out of hours' but, as a guide, out of hours should be considered as:
- Weekday between 6pm and 8am
- Weekends
- Closure Days and Bank Holidays

4   RESPONSIBILITIES

Heads of Schools and Functions (HoS/F) are responsible for determining what the normal working hours are for their building(s) and are responsible for ensuring the risks arising from the ONH work activities of their School or Function are adequately controlled, so far as is reasonably practical. To do this, the HoS/F are responsible for identifying who is responsible for managing all activities and areas. They should ensure that sufficient competent staff are available to assess the risks and that they have adequate time to put the controls in place, implement those controls and regularly review the assessment.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for having suitable and sufficient risk assessments in place for the ONH work activities they are in control of. They are responsible for ensuring that the significant findings from the risk assessment are recorded and that identified control measure are

implemented before work commences. They should also ensure that the findings of the risk assessment are communicated to those carrying out the work and the assessment is regularly reviewed.

Persons occupying a University building ONH, which includes staff, students and other building occupants, e.g. tenants and members of the public, must ensure that they are aware of the risk assessment covering the planned activity and its findings, and apply the control measures that have been implemented by their Manager/Supervisor. They must comply with emergency procedures and any restrictions, identified by the risk assessment covering the activities taking place ONH. They must inform their Manager/Supervisor or Researcher responsible for the risk assessment covering the activities if they have any medical or health problems 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. They must ensure that they are aware of:

- What the fire alarm sounds like

- The emergency evacuation routes and fire assembly point

- The location of fire alarm call points

- The location of emergency telephones

- First aid arrangements

- The phone in/out procedure

5   REQUIREMENTS

Procedures must be in place to:

- Define normal working hours for the building/function and ensure that this is reflected in the local Health & Safety Code.

- Risk assess any work activities that take place ONH

- 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. This can be achieved by inclusion in the Health & Safety Code (for staff and students) or in contract conditions of booking for external third parties such as conferences.

- When establishing arrangements for working ONH the School/Function is required to consider the needs of people who have declared a disability or a medical condition and the reasonable adjustments they may require. Authorisation of ONH working should take account of these arrangements and any advice from Occupational Health about individual needs. If authorisation for ONH work is requested, any PEEPs (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans) or GEEPs (General Emergency Evacuation Plans) should be reviewed to consider ONH work.

- Establish a phone-in/phone-out system. This can be arranged with University Security . The person carrying out the work, phones in to the University Security Control Room (Ext 7799 or 0118 3787799 if calling from a mobile or outside the University) prior to

commencing work quoting name, location and anticipated time of departure. Upon completion of the work, a phone out call is made stating that the work has been completed safely and confirm when they will leave the building. If the phone out call is not received by the previously declared time a security patroller will check the work area.

- Security are not expected to comply with local signing in and out procedures.

- If equipment is left running unattended ONH, this must be reflected in the risk assessment for that activity and overnight running signage displayed. Particular consideration should be given to sudden loss of mains services or flooding and the control measures that should be in place when writing the risk assessment.

6 TRAINING

To be competent, it is recommended the risk assessor should have completed the H&S Services general risk assessment e-learning course. They should also have sufficient knowledge and experience or training in the activities, the equipment, hazardous substances and work layout involved, so that suitable control measures can be specified in the assessment. Where the activity involves a hazardous substance, the Risk Assessor should have also completed the H&S Services COSHH assessment e-learning course. The assessor may require assistance from other knowledgeable or experience staff in their School or Function in order to complete a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. Alternatively, the local Health and Safety Coordinator (HSC), or the Health and Safety Services staff may be able to provide advice within the scope of their competency. The risk assessment for the ONH activity must include information on the training required to undertake the activity safely Training should be recorded along with details of when training should be refreshed e.g. every year, every 3 years, after changes to the activity.

7 REVIEW & AUDIT

Risk assessments for working ONH should be reviewed regularly, at least every 3 years, if there is a change in the activity or following an incident

8 RECORDS & RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

Risk assessments should be retained for 10 years.

9 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Health and Safety at Work etc Act Regulations (1974)
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

10 APPENDICES

Appendix 1:   Examples of Significant and Low Hazard work

Low Hazard Work

Examples of low hazard work are:

- Office work, reading, writing, drawing and marking

- The use of optical microscopes

- Feeding and maintenance of small harmless animals

- Glasshouse watering

- Routine plant examination and adjustments

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

Significant and High Hazard work

Examples of significant or high hazard 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.

- Cryo-liquids

Or activities such as:

- Working on exposed live conductors operating at greater than 50V AC or 120V 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

- Working with chainsaws