

## 9. OUT-OF-HOURS WORKING

---

### 9.1.1 Contents:

Aim	9.2.1
Introduction	9.3.1
Definition of <i>hours of expected building occupancy</i>	9.4.1
Policy	9.5.1
Implementation	9.6.1
“High risk” activities	9.7.1
Training	9.8.1
Further information	9.9.1

**9.2.1 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.

**9.3.1 Introduction:** It is acknowledged that, for a variety of legitimate reasons, not all work within University buildings on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus can be done entirely within what are defined by the University as “hours of expected building occupancy” (see definition at Paragraph 9.4.1). There is a need, therefore, for special measures to be laid down for the safety, welfare and security 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*); though, in general, these should usually only be undertaken *in exceptional circumstances*, and not be considered to be a routine and normal aspect of work when, otherwise, the need cannot be *wholly justified*.

9.3.2 This Section of the Safety Manual for the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus specifies who shall be allowed access to University buildings on the campus 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 (see definition at Paragraph 9.4.1).

9.3.3 A separate section of this Manual (Section 10: 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 (see definition at Paragraph 9.4.1).

**9.4.1 Definition of *Hours of Expected Building Occupancy*:** These are defined by for University buildings on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus 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); and
- Any day on which a University building will normally be closed (for example, on a University or Public Holiday).

**9.5.1 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 (Paragraph 9.7.1 lists a number of activities that are prohibited outside hours of expected building occupancy).

9.5.2 Work that is expressly prohibited outside hours of expected buildings occupancy (see Paragraph 9.7.1, 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.

9.5.3 *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 or service manager.

**9.6.1 Implementation:** All laboratory-based activities should be carried out as far as possible *within* “hours of expected building occupancy” (see definition at Paragraph 9.4.1), and with an appropriate complement of suitably experienced staff present within the area.

9.6.2 The first requirement, in formally assessing the risk associated with late working, will be for the Principal Investigator/relevant line manager 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 template for a late working risk assessment and guidance notes are available at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/online-resources/risk-assessments>

9.6.3 Only when alternatives have been explored and rejected as genuinely impractical, and a formal risk assessment for late working has been completed and signed by the Principal Investigator/relevant line manager *and* each prospective lone-worker, with the prospective late-worker having first attended late and lone-working safety training, and with all necessary control measures having been put in place, should authorisation be given for a person to work late within a building.

9.6.4 The formal risk assessment for late working prepared by the Principal Investigator/relevant line manager, and signed also by each prospective late worker, *must not* conflict with the policy and procedures described in this Section and in Section (Lone-Working) of this Safety Manual.

9.6.5 The presence of UofE Security Officers, who regularly patrol through University buildings on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus, does not constitute sufficiently regular contact with staff and students to warrant late working without other more substantial arrangements having been put in place.

9.6.6 Any person working anywhere within one of the University buildings on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus outside of hours of expected building occupancy (see definition at Paragraph 9.4.1), *must* engage with the QR code readers and/or sign themselves IN *and* OUT using one of the special log books provided for that purpose; QR code readers are provided at reception areas in many buildings, and sign-in/out books are usually located on Reception desks at the main entrance to buildings on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus.

9.6.7 When using sign-in books, please *print* your full name, the number(s) of the room(s) in which you will be working and the time that you entered the building.

9.6.8 It is not necessary to wait until 18:00 on a weekday before registering your intent to work into evening hours. If this can be predicted earlier in the day, it is perfectly reasonable to register details in the log before 18:00, but remember to cancel the entry if your need to work late is revised before then.

9.6.9 You should certainly have completed an entry in the sign-in book, where these are being used, if you are still in either building after 18.00 hours on a normal working day. If you are accompanied by visitors, you should record how many visitors you are having alongside your name. Remember that you are responsible for your visitors *at all times* while they are in the building. Visitors should not normally be permitted into the building outside hours of expected building occupancy (see definition at Paragraph 9.4.1).

9.6.10 Remember also that failing to sign out or cancel a predicted late working entry in the log where these are being used, could put at risk/waste the time of Security staff or emergency service personnel who may be looking for you when you are no longer present within the building. If you remember only after you have already left the site that you forgot to sign-out, please contact UofE Security on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus by telephone (0131 242 9389/90) and ask them to record that you have left the building where you'd previously signed-in as a late-worker.

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

9.6.12 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 oxygen repletion monitoring and 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.**

9.6.13 Workers are encouraged to inform their supervisor/manager of any illness of condition that they know of (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.

9.6.14 Having been granted authorisation to work alone within any area of either building, workers will be expected still to conform to **all** relevant generic and local rules governing health and safety.

**9.6.15 IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ANYONE WORKING OUTSIDE OF “HOURS OF EXPECTED BUILDING OCCUPANCY” (see definition at Paragraph 9.4.1), OR WORKING ALONE (see definition at Paragraph 10.4.1), IS COMPLETELY FAMILIAR WITH AND COMPLIES AT ALL TIME WITH EMERGENCY PROCEDURES.**

9.6.16 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.

9.6.17 In such cases, fire safety considerations should form part of the lone and lone-working risk assessment (see Section 8 of this Manual) that must be completed *before* working outside hours of expected building occupancy (see Paragraph 9.4.1) or lone-working (see Section 10 of this Manual) can be authorised.

9.6.18 Staff present within the building outside of hours of expected building occupancy should evacuate as they would during the normal working day (see Sections 5 and 6 of this Manual for details) and proceed to the correct Evacuation Assembly Point to await the arrival of Security Officers and attending firefighters, *etc.* Building security staff will use the log books referred to at Paragraphs 9.6.1 to 9.6.5 to inform attending fire-fighters of the most likely locations of staff which, in turn, will enable attending firefighters *etc* to prioritise search of the building.

9.6.19 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. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will usually proceed first to the location of one of the building’s fire alarm control panels, so expect them to drive directly either to the main front or rear service doors of the building concerned.

**9.7.1 “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/ line manager, taking into account the number of people available to carry out the tasks, and to supervise it, and their respective levels of experience (see Paragraph 9.5.3):

- 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 Paragraph 9.6.12 and Section 14 of this Manual);
- Any work in a *Containment Level Three* biological facility (including work with genetically modified organisms) – see Section 14 (Special Safety Precautions) of this Manual;
- Any work with radioactive substances that by definition requires to be managed in a *Controlled Area* – see Section 14 (Special Safety Precautions) of this Manual;
- Manually handling hazardous or especially awkward loads, *e.g.* moving compressed gas cylinders – see Section 16 (Manual Handling) of this Manual;
- Setting up and implementing a fumigation procedure;
- Work involving flammable solvents (volumes greater than 200ml);
- Work involving use of a Bunsen burner (or equivalent); and
- 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 Paragraphs 9.6.1 to 9.6.13 of this Section, and in Section 10 of this Manual, *only* if a lone-worker does not enter the *Controlled Area*. Further guidance will be found in local rules for the biomedical MRI.

9.7.2 Attention is drawn also to Paragraph 10.12.1 in Section 10 (Lone-Working), which lists activities that are *strictly prohibited* on a lone-working basis regardless of time of day or day or the week.

9.7.3 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).

9.7.4 The training requirement set out in Paragraph 9.8.1 is a further requirement before commencing/approving work to be done on a late and/or lone-working basis.

**9.8.1 Training:** The Edinburgh bioQuarter Buildings H&S Committee has resolved that before commencing work on a late and/or lone-working basis, the worker must first have attended and completed a late and lone-working training course provided by the Campus H&S Manager.

**9.9.1 Further information:** General information on out-of-hours working appears on the University’s Health and Safety web site:

[http://www.docs.esg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/Policy/Framework\\_-\\_Arrangements.pdf](http://www.docs.esg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/Policy/Framework_-_Arrangements.pdf)

*Last reviewed/updated: 05<sup>th</sup> January, 2022*