# St. John's Regional Fire Department
# Policy and Operational Guidelines

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| **Title:** 02-02-13 | Fire Prevention Division Working Alone Policy |
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| **Title:** | 13 Fire Prevention Division Working Alone Policy |

## Purpose

To establish procedures for Fire Prevention staff who are required to work alone.

## Background

Fire Prevention staff are often required to work independently and attend businesses or other occupancies where they may be alone with owners, occupants, or representatives. This POG has been developed to provide guidance and establish procedures that support employee safety while working alone.

This is a new POG.

## Procedure

The following can be considered working alone situations:

- Building Inspections
- Home Oxygen Inspections
- Complaints
- Burning Permit Inspections
- Mobile Food Trucks

Fire Inspectors shall perform the following prior to conducting inspections:

- Perform a hazard assessment to determine if the inspection will need two SJRFD representatives.

- Identify the working alone contact person: Fire Prevention Officer or Designate

A. Contact person must have:
    i. Emergency numbers to call.
    ii. Supervisor number to call.

- Determine the frequency of contact between the employee and the working alone contact.

    A. Maximum time between contacts is one hour.
    B. Time between contacts will be lessened to 30 minutes for hazardous tasks.
    C. Inspectors will contact Fire Prevention Officer or Designate on arrival and completion of task.
- Contact will be via group text on cell phone. Fire Prevention Officer or Designate will be responsible for checking in with staff at the predetermined intervals when they are out.
- Ensure that the method of contact is charged and functioning.
- If the employee fails to make contact within the allotted time, the working alone contact person shall try to contact the employee.
- If the employee cannot be contacted, the working alone contact person shall contact the Supervisor.
    A. Fire Prevention Officer or Designate and another employee shall then go to the last known location of the employee. Information for all inspections shall be entered into the employee's Outlook calendar.
- The working alone contact person should maintain a log sheet of working alone situations.
    A. A copy is to be regularly sent to the user department.
- Working alone procedures must be reviewed and communicated to all affected employees.

**Entry into Private Property:**

Employees may be required to enter private property. When doing so, proceed as follows:

- Alert the supervisor of the house address, reason for the visit and expected time inside the dwelling.
    - Alert the supervisor if the visit is expected to be longer than 15 minutes and contact them at a discussed time, during your visit.
    - Contact your supervisor when the visit is over.
- Confirm the home occupant is over 16 years old. Do not enter if they are sixteen or younger, leave and reschedule a return meeting time.
- Carry City identification and supply it, if asked.
- If there is any potential for a hostile environment, a minimum of two employees must complete the visit, as approved by the Fire Prevention Officer or designate.
- Terminate the visit if there is any reason to believe that the persons in the property are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if the situation reveals potential for threatening or hostile behavior:
    A. Alert the Fire Prevention Officer or designate who will contact the homeowner and explain why the visit was cancelled.
    B. Consider requesting the assistance of the RNC.
- Ensure safe, clear access to the property - walkway shoveled, steps salted and in good order.
    - If this is not available, terminate the visit immediately and contact your supervisor.

- Ensure a method of contact is available such as two-way radio or cell phone.
- Do not enter if you have suspicions of unsafe acts or conditions.
- Do not remove your safety footwear.
  - Alert the homeowner of this and wear the supplied blue "booties."
- Do not enter backyards/sheds/garages unannounced, only if accompanied with homeowner.
- Require the homeowner to place dogs or cats in another room, even if the homeowner comments that the dog is friendly
- Complete business as quickly as possible.

**Parking Lot Safety:**

Employees are encouraged to:
- Park near the building in a highly visible and well-lit area.
- Park nears the stairs or a well-lit exit in an underground lot.
- Use the main building entrance - avoid rear or secluded exits.
- Lock doors and roll up windows once in the vehicle.
- Have a plan. Know where to go for safety and how to call for help.
- Try to walk with a coworker or security.
- Be aware of your surroundings and trust your instincts.
- Do not:
  - Dig in a purse or bag.
  - Wear headphones or be distracted by cellphones.
  - Carry heavy briefcases or bags that may get in the way.

If employees must walk alone:
- Have a co-worker watch from a window.
- Wave to a window even if no one is watching, it gives the illusion that someone is there.
- Stay on well-lit streets and in the center of the sidewalk.
  - Stay away from hiding spots such as bushes, doorways, alleys, and parked cars.
  - Cross the road, if necessary.

Have ready:
- Keys to unlock the vehicle.
- Keys or cardkey to unlock building doors.
- A whistle or other personal alarm.

When approaching the car, look around, inside, and even glance underneath for people who may be present. If you are suspicious, walk away and go to a safe place and call for help.

If it is off hours, take the following precautions:
- Alert a supervisor if working late and when you expect to leave.
- Park the car to a well-lit area close to the building before dark.
- Have a check-in procedure in place.
- Attempt to work late on the same night as a colleague.
- Leave quietly if you suspect that someone might be inside, go to a safe area with a lockable

door and call for help.

- Make a comment like "my supervisor will be right here and will be able to help you" if you encounter someone unfamiliar, this should indicate that you are not alone.
- Call the police or security officers if you suspect someone is lurking outside.

**Post Incident (If one occurs):**

If an incident occurs during a working alone situation:

- Employees shall complete an Incident Investigation Report form and submit to their supervisor.
- Employees are reminded that if needed the City of St. John's and St. John's Regional Fire Department can provide assistance through the Employee and Family Assistance Program.

**Approvals**
Fire Chief/Director

**Responsibility**
St. John's Regional Fire Department

POG #02-02-13
Approved by:

Sherry L. Colford
Fire Chief
Director of Regional Fire and Emergency Services

Sept 29, 2026
Date

**Appendix/Appendices**
None