

TOOLBOX TALK · HEALTH

Working Alone

About 8 minutes to deliver

Every ordinary hazard gets worse when there is nobody to notice — the fix is a check-in somebody actually escalates.

Working alone does not create new hazards. It removes the thing that keeps ordinary hazards from becoming fatal: somebody noticing.

A twisted ankle is nothing with a crew. Alone, at the back of a site, in February, with a phone in the truck, it is something else. Cardiac events, heat illness, a fall, a chemical exposure — in every one of them the outcome turns on how long until somebody comes.

SOME WORK IS NEVER DONE ALONE

- Permit-required confined space entry. 1910.146 requires an attendant outside for the whole entry. This is not negotiable and it is not a job for someone who "is around."
- Live electrical work where the standard requires a second person.
- Hot work in an enclosed space, which requires an outside attendant under 1926.353(b).
- Working at height on a personal fall arrest system, because suspension trauma gives somebody minutes and self-rescue often is not possible.
- Confined space entry rescue, ever. More than half the people who die in confined spaces are would-be rescuers.

If you are alone and the job turns into one of these, the job stops.

THE CHECK-IN HAS TO BE REAL

A check-in system fails in one specific way: somebody misses a call and nobody does anything about it until the end of the day.

- Agreed times, agreed with a named person. Not "the office."
- An agreed escalation — what happens if you do not call, how long they wait, who they send, and who calls emergency services. Written down.
- The person on the other end has to know they are on it. A check-in nobody is expecting is not a check-in.
- Tell someone the plan before you go: where, what, and when you expect to be done. Change it and tell them again.

PRACTICAL

- Phone charged, on you, not in the vehicle. Signal checked before you rely on it — dead spots in basements, plant rooms, lift shafts and steel structures are exactly where you will need it.
- Know the address of where you are, well enough to say it to a dispatcher. A gate number is not an address.
- Take the harder task down a notch. Alone is the wrong time for the ladder job, the heavy lift, or the thing you have never done.
- First aid kit and, if you are outdoors, water and warm layers, in reach rather than in the truck.
- Lone worker apps and man-down devices are worth it for regular lone work — but only if somebody is watching the alerts.

ASK THE CREW

- Who is working alone this week, and who are they checking in with?
- If somebody missed a check-in at four o'clock, what would actually happen?
- Are there places on our sites with no phone signal?

29 CFR 1926.50 · 29 CFR 1910.38 · 29 CFR 1910.146

This is a toolbox talk, not a course. It is general awareness on one topic — not site-specific, not a hazard assessment, and not a substitute for assessment of your workplace by a competent person, your written programs, or manufacturers' instructions. It does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. Regulations change; verify against the current standard. Whoever delivers it is responsible for deciding it is suitable and sufficient for the work. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, not a substitute for professional medical care or certified emergency-response training, and it confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. Migna Safety Solutions · training.mignasafety.com

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Working Alone

About 8 minutes to deliver · 29 CFR 1926.50 · 29 CFR 1910.38 · 29 CFR 1910.146

Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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