

Geoscience guidelines for *Working alone*

The following rules apply to anybody working in the Geoscience laboratories or during field work.

Make sure to have completed the basic laboratory introduction according to the list on the department [website](#).

Generally, a task that can be carried out alone safely within normal working hours (i.e., Monday-Friday 07-18) can also be carried out alone outside of normal working hours (evening, weekends, and during holidays). Note that working with HF requires you to follow the *Geoscience guidelines for Hydrofluoric acid (HF)*.

- Labs require lab-specific training. Always be sure to have correct instruction and information about the work before starting. When working alone it is even more important to think through the work processes and try to predict where problems may arise. Note where you find escape routes and emergency equipment.
- Always use the necessary and protective equipment. Make sure to have a plan for any unexpected or unnormal situation that might arise. Examples: What to do in an acid spill; running out of consumables; equipment problems; power failure; being locked out. Ask technical staff for guidance on what to do in a situation before starting your work alone.
- Plan your work alone to include short breaks. Working with heavy workloads and otherwise demanding jobs (e.g., sawing and crushing) should be limited to short intervals during the day.
- Make a "Buddy agreement": Always inform someone where you are going to work and for how long. Make an agreement with this "buddy" on how he/she will follow up (e.g. check on you in the lab, make a phone call at regular intervals). This person must be able to help you quickly in case of an emergency.
- Always carry a charged mobile phone and be aware that some areas may have bad coverage. Have the necessary phone numbers ready in case of a sudden emergency. Note the posters with contact possibilities placed in laboratories and in hallways at Aarhus University.

Consider your options in case of sudden problems: Think of alternative solutions or consider getting help immediately. Wrong decisions taken in a stressful situation will often increase the risk of accidents and danger to persons or equipment.

Always try to avoid working alone. If you have a medical condition (e.g., epilepsy or diabetes where you can lose conscience), do not work alone if a specific work situation would endanger yourself or others.

Never work alone if you are not sure about the processes or your situation. If in doubt, [contact your safety organization](#).

Before working alone, you need to assess the risks. Maybe the work involves decanting large volumes of chemicals, working at high pressure or extreme temperatures, or with instruments operating at high voltage. If the risk cannot be sufficiently minimized, do not work alone.

Working alone with X-ray instruments or certain other analytical equipment requires permission from the staff member responsible for the instrument. If in doubt, contact the lab manager.

If a work process such as sawing or handling specific hazardous chemicals makes you feel uneasy or unsafe, you should not do it. Talk to your supervisor, the head of the laboratories, or a work environment representative.