

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

HARVARD FOREST

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Harvard Forest Working Alone and Working After Hours Laboratory Policies

Prudent Practices in the Laboratories by the National Research Council states “Generally it is prudent to **avoid** working alone at the bench in a laboratory building. Individuals working in separate laboratories outside of working hours should make arrangements to check on each other periodically... Experiments known to be hazardous should not be undertaken by a worker who is alone in a laboratory. Under unusually hazardous conditions, special rules may be necessary.”

The following policies apply to work in all laboratories and lab related spaces at the Harvard Forest.

Laboratory Working Hours are defined as the hours of work from Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. All other times are considered “after hours.”

Working Alone is defined as being in a laboratory setting without the knowledge of another person(s). During laboratory working hours, if you are alone in the lab, make sure you are in audible range of someone.

When possible, schedule all laboratory work during normal working hours. Workers should perform their work in accordance with written, defined experimental procedures. In cases where it is necessary to work after hours and/or alone, you may do so in consultation with your supervisor or project PI. Try to avoid any procedures that involve hazardous chemicals after hours. It is the responsibility of the supervisor or project PI to ensure that all laboratory workers working under her/his supervision have properly been trained in guidelines to minimize risk, injury, and ensure safety. This training includes:

- Successfully completing the “Harvard Forest Lab Safety Orientation Review” and other necessary safety training (as determined by supervisor)
- Knowledge of safe procedures and practices
- Knowledge of Emergency Protocols (found in the Emergency Response Guide)
- Contact information of person(s) for non-emergency situations

Any individual who must work alone or work after hours in the laboratory must complete the **Harvard Forest Working Alone and Working After Hours form**, and return it to the Lab Manager.