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WORKING ALONE; NSLS ANALYSIS

PREPARED BY ANDREW ACKERMAN

Background

The NSLS complex includes 8 buildings. Personnel work in various areas throughout these buildings and some locations are remote. Personnel work at different hours. Access to all areas is allowed at all times.

Both during normal business hours and at times outside the typical business day, personnel can be working in locations alone for extended times. These activities can include office, experiment, and technical work. Working alone presents concern that personnel can be injured with no help available and that injury can go unnoticed for an extended time.

During machine operations, the NSLS Operations staff is present in building 725 for the full twenty four hour day. The Operations staff in the building during that time includes a single Machine Operator and two Operations Coordinators. The Operations Coordinators maintain a routine presence on the experiment floor through their normal work activities and through conduct of routine walkthroughs. The Operations Coordinators visit the beam line areas and check the open set up laboratories. Remote locations are not checked.

During extended maintenance times, the NSLS Operations staff is present in building 725 during normal business times only. The Operations staff in the building during that time varies.

During machine operations, building 729 (SDL) is staffed by two operators/experimenters. The schedule varies. At other times, there is no staffing requirement for the building.

There are no staffing requirements for the other buildings within the NSLS complex.

Issues to consider

Allowing personnel to work alone provides needed and desired flexibility and adds to productivity. There are some instances where the nature of the task results in a single individual working in a remote location and it would be impractical to require that two people always be present.

It is impossible to provide constant oversight for personnel in remote areas or during unusual hours. No combination of cameras or check in will provide constant oversight.

BNL Guidance / Requirements

Working alone is referenced in two areas within BNL documentation.

SBMS

In the SBMS, "Chemicals, Working with" subject area; section 2.3, step 10 contains the following text:

"When working alone with hazardous chemicals during off hours:

- Verify that someone else is in the general area and is aware of work with chemical activities and location, or
- Notify the Safeguards and Security Division at ext. 2238 of location, duration of work, and estimated time of departure.

Note: Do not work alone if prohibited by the Supervisor or Work Planning and Control documentation."

Training

In the BNL web training course, "Laboratory Standard" (HP-IND-220), a slide in section 07 includes the following text:

"If it becomes necessary to work alone in a laboratory, either before or after regular business hours, you should:

- Obtain approval from your supervisor
- Ensure that you are cautious, and
- Notify the Safeguards and Security Division (SSD) on extension 2238 at the start and end of that day's work
 - o As they make their rounds, SSD will stop in and check on you, just to make sure that everything is okay

Prudent practice

Although impossible to provide constant oversight, it is prudent to employ reasonable measures to monitor the status of personnel. The following measures are incorporated into NSLS policy by this document.

Goal

The goal of the guidelines listed below is to minimize the time that personnel who are working alone are isolated from contact with others. Individuals working alone are responsible to take reasonable action in pursuit of that goal.

Guidelines

- Individuals working alone in non-office areas that are not toured by the NSLS Operations staff are encouraged to maintain contact with someone who is in a position to help if that contact is broken. That contact arrangement should be established with the following intent:
 - o The working individual should report his/her:
 - work location
 - intended work duration
 - the intended work tasks
 - o Based on the information reported above, the worker and contact should arrange:
 - an acceptable contact method and frequency
 - a close out method and expected time

NOTE: Once this arrangement is made, it is important that worker follow the requirements as break in contact or failure to close out will result in concern and required action from the contact person

- o The contact person must be willing and able to check the status of the individual working alone through a personal search of the work area.
- o The contact person is responsible to complete a search of the work area if contact is broken or not closed as arranged. The contact need only search the location where it was agreed that the worker would be working alone. If the worker is not found, the contact may consider the matter closed and is not responsible to continue seeking the worker.

- The following individuals may act as a contact for the person working alone:
 - o The person's supervisor
 - o A colleague
 - o The NSLS Control Room personnel
 - o BNL Security personnel

- NSLS supervisors must know where and when their staff is working alone and must approve that arrangement. That approval can be verbal and must include assurance that a contact arrangement is in place.

NSLS Operations Staff Requirements

- The NSLS Operations staff must complete a minimum of 3 walkthrough tours for each 12 hour shift and 2 tours during each 8 hour shift. The tour is to include walkthrough of the beam line areas and open (unlocked) set up laboratories connected to the experiment floor. Operations personnel will question anyone found working alone to assure that a contact arrangement is in place.

- If a worker chooses to arrange contact with the NSLS Control Room, the Operations staff will take the following action:
 - o Upon notification, Operations personnel will log the name and location of the individual working alone.
 - o The worker and the Operations contact will determine the frequency and method of communication based on the location and work to be performed.
 - o The Operations contact will log the time and status of the close out.

- Should the communication fail or not close as arranged, the Operations contact will seek out the worker at the work location. If the worker is not found at the expected location, the Operations contact will not investigate further and will refer the matter to the NSLS ESH&Q Manager for follow up during normal business hours.