

Why is Working Alone One of the Greatest Risks to Employee Safety that often gets Ignored?



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Learning Objectives

Part 1: Why is protecting lone workers so important?

- Examples of working alone or in isolation
- Layers of legislation and regulations
- What is this telling us? Key takeaways...

Part 2: What's the challenge? How do we implement best practices?

- Overview of 3 key components to a working alone solution
 - Component details and Best Practices
-
- **Final Review and Conclusions**
 - **Questions and Answers period**





Who is ProTELEC Security + Safety Ltd.?

Who is Randy Pokrant?



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Part 1: Why is protecting lone workers so important?

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Why the need to protect lone workers?

It's the weekend and you've decided to go into the office early on a Saturday to get some work done. You're the only person there, and no one knows you're at work.

What's the worst that could happen?

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A close-up, low-angle shot of a car's rear wheel on a snowy road. The tire is black with a tread pattern, and snow is piled up on the rim and the road surface. The background shows a dense forest of evergreen trees covered in snow, with a bright light source creating a lens flare effect in the upper right corner.

You're on the road to a job site, and the winter conditions are making driving more difficult. To make matters worse, it is dangerously cold, and you didn't tell anyone when you expected to arrive at your destination.

If there is an accident, how long until someone realizes something has happened and dispatches an emergency response?

Why the need to protect lone workers?

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Why the need to protect lone workers?

You own a retail facility open 24/7. Due to the inherent risks of working directly with the public, you implement a lone worker safety monitoring system for your employees.

Late one night you receive a phone call from your lone worker monitoring service. An employee has missed a safety check. You ask for emergency services to be dispatched.

It turns out your employee had a medical emergency due to an illness.

What would have happened if you had not implemented a safety check system?

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**Working alone and in isolation
examples from Randy's career**



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There are many Working alone or in isolation examples



Why the need to protect lone workers?

Let's examine the current layers of legal requirements including key definitions





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First Layer: Federal Legislation, Bill C-45 (Westray bill)

Introduced in 2003 and became law March 31, 2004

Amendment to Section 217.1 of the Criminal Code of Canada

-  Those who direct work have a duty to **take reasonable steps to prevent bodily harm** arising from performing the work or task. These reasonable steps apply to the safety of employees, or any other person directed to perform the work.
-  Organizations and individuals may be **criminally liable** for failure to take reasonable measures to protect employee safety.

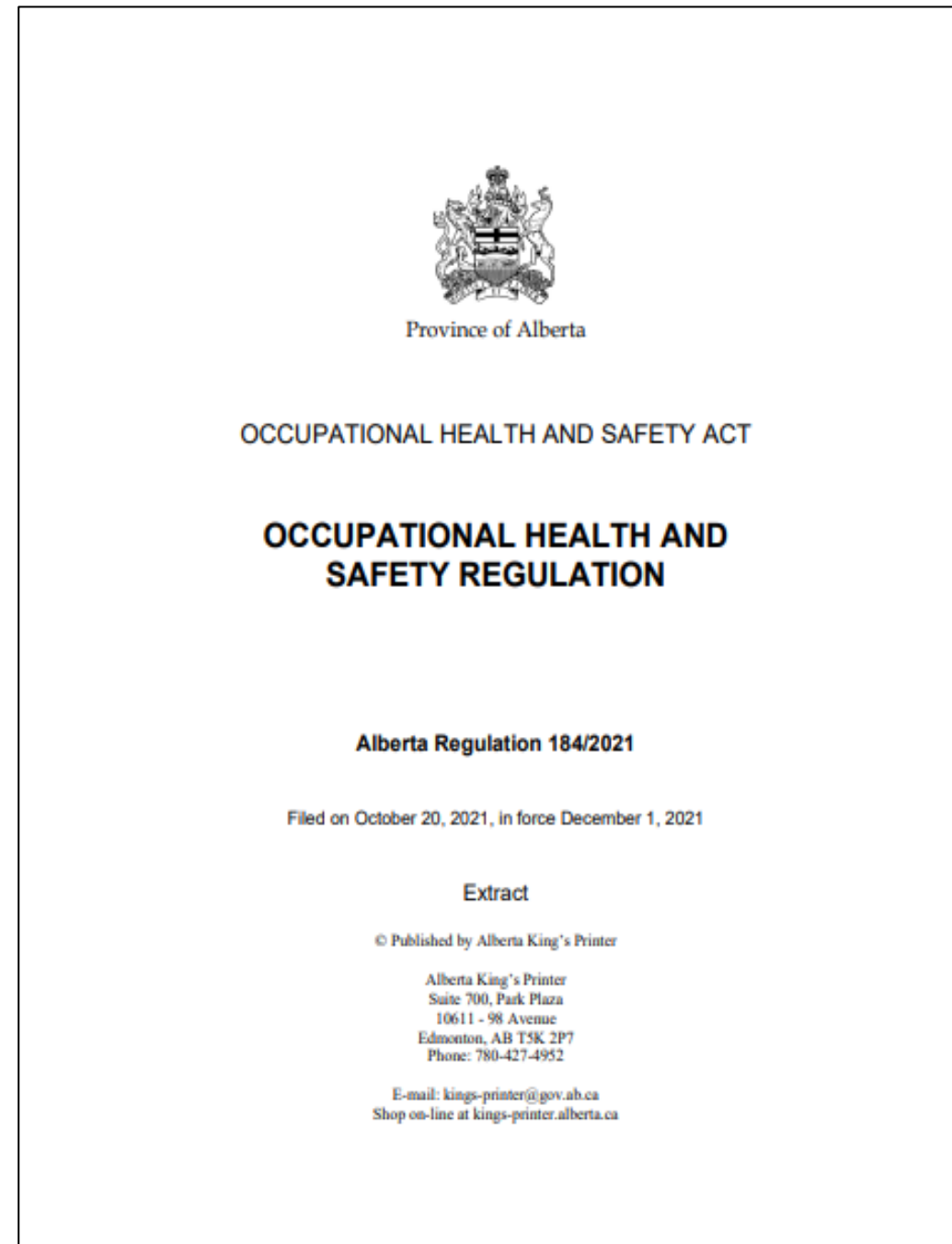
Source: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/legisl/billc45.html>

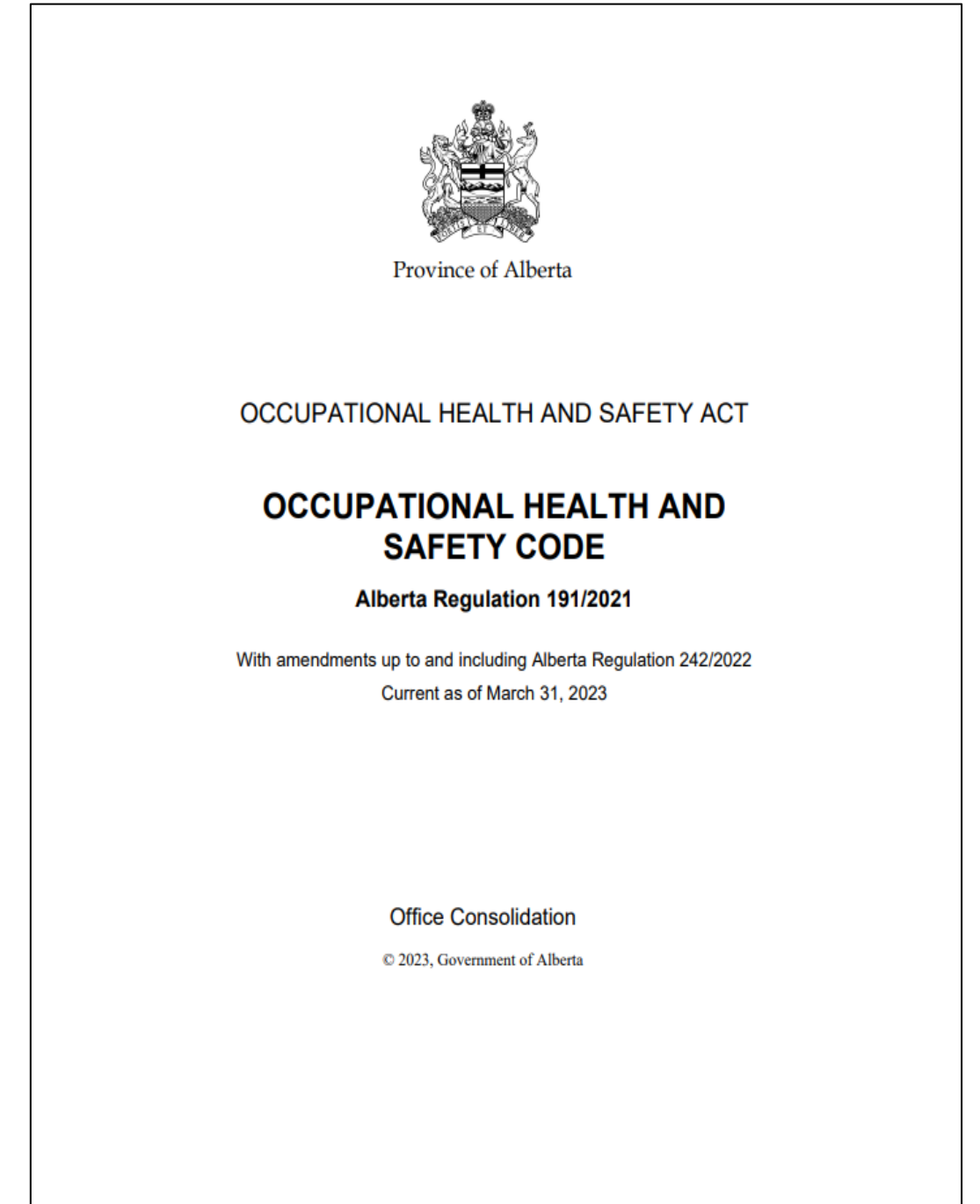
Second Layer: Provincial Legislation

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Regulations and Related Codes

<https://search-ohs-laws.alberta.ca/legislation/occupational-health-and-safety-code/>



- Embedded in the Regulations are the Codes employers must follow.
- Workplace Safety Health Branch enforces the Act and associated Regulations under provincial jurisdiction.
- **Today we are focusing on two parts of the related Codes**



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Occupational Health and Safety Code

The OH&S Code provides specific technical health and safety rules and requirements for Alberta Workplaces

Alberta Regulation 191/2021

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Occupational Health and Safety Code

Part 1: Definitions and General Application

<https://search-ohs-laws.alberta.ca/legislation/occupational-health-and-safety-code/part-1-definitions-and-general-application/>

“Workplace” definition – Similarly identified in many Canadian provinces.

Means any building, site, workshop, structure, mine, mobile vehicle or any other premises or location whether indoors or outdoors in which one or more workers, or self-employed persons, are engaged in work or have worked.

“Work Area” definition – Alberta

Means a place at a work site...**where a worker is, or may be, during work or during a work break.**

- By definition this includes a home office.

Occupational Health and Safety Code

Part 28: Working Alone

<https://search-ohs-laws.alberta.ca/legislation/occupational-health-and-safety-code/part-28-working-alone/>

Part 28 Working Alone

Application

393(1) This Part applies if

- (a) a worker is working alone at a work site, and
- (b) assistance is not readily available if there is an emergency or the worker is injured or ill.

393(2) Working alone is considered a hazard for the purposes of Part 2.

Precautions required

394(1) An employer must, for any worker working alone, provide an effective communication system consisting of

- (a) radio communication,
- (b) landline or cellular telephone communication, or
- (c) some other effective means of electronic communication

that includes regular contact by the employer or designate at intervals appropriate to the nature of the hazard associated with the worker's work.

394(1.1) Despite subsection (1), if effective electronic communication is not practicable at the work site, the employer must ensure that

- (a) the employer or designate visits the worker, or
- (b) the worker contacts the employer or designate at intervals appropriate to the nature of the hazard associated with the worker's work.

394(2) and **394(3)** Repealed.

Occupational Health and Safety Code

Part 28: Working Alone

<https://search-ohs-laws.alberta.ca/legislation/occupational-health-and-safety-code/part-28-working-alone/>

“**Working Alone**” means the performance of any work function when:

- (a) the worker is the **only worker for that employer at a work site** at any time.

- (b) **assistance is not readily available** if there is an emergency, or the worker is injured, or ill.

Occupational Health and Safety Code

Part 28: Working Alone

<https://search-ohs-laws.alberta.ca/legislation/occupational-health-and-safety-code/part-28-working-alone/>

Common Working Alone or Working in Isolation regulatory requirements

An employer must:

1. Identify risks arising from the worker's work and take steps to eliminate or reduce these risks.
2. Develop a safe working alone policy and procedures and provide training of the procedures.
3. Establish an effective form of communication (radio, phone, cellular, or other).
4. Communication must include a **system of regular contact** at appropriate / predetermined intervals.

Working alone procedures must include:

- HOW to check on a lone worker.
- WHAT to do when a worker is not responding to safety checks.
- Documentation of safety checks for proof of due diligence and to ensure compliance.



Hard hats, eye and hearing protection, gloves

Let's think about this another way...

PPE for Workers



Fall protection



Ergonomics, musculoskeletal injury prevention

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What about PPE for lone workers?

What is this all telling us?



Working Alone affects us all and it doesn't matter what industry it is, at some point in someone's role, they are likely working alone or working in isolation.



Employers have a duty to act!

Key Takeaways - Safety Matters!

- **The very nature of Working Alone is a Hazard that must be controlled.**
 - Many employees experience this in their roles.
 - Employers have a duty to keep lone workers safe while on the job.
 - Employers must provide (among other things), a **system of regular contact**.
- **Regulatory Requirements Federal (Bill C-45) and more detailed Provincial**
 - Employer Responsibilities and Employee Rights
 - Employer must ensure compliance and provide proof of due diligence

Working Alone or Working in Isolation

So, what's the challenge?

The challenge is identifying an effective and affordable solution.



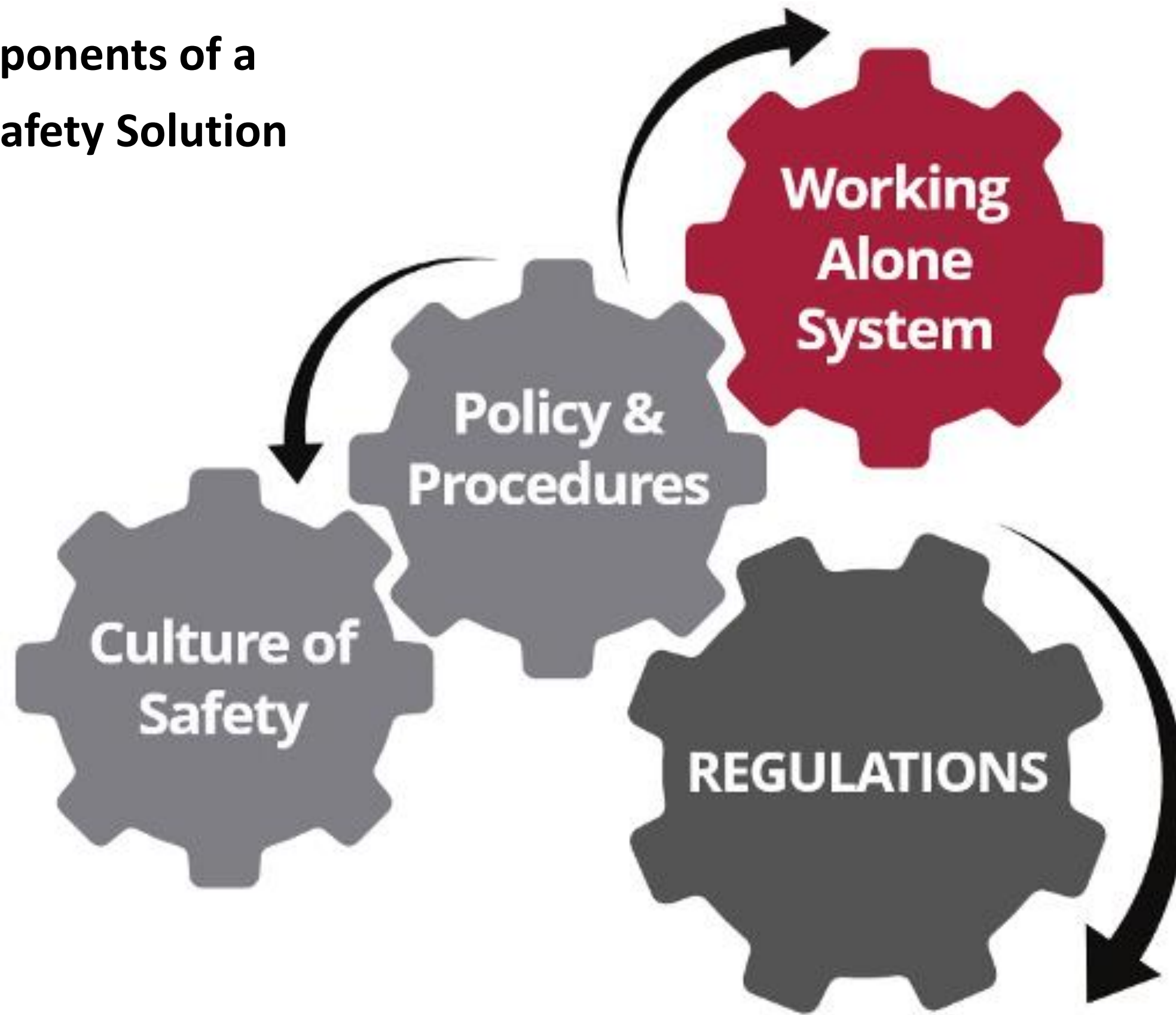
Solutions for Working Alone

3 key Components



- 1) Have a **system of regular contact** that protects lone workers.
 - It will monitor their well-being with regular safety checks.
 - It will signal an emergency when the lone worker needs help.
- 2) Establish working alone policies and procedures.
- 3) Build a corporate culture that focuses on safety.

**The Key Components of a
Lone Worker Safety Solution**



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Policies & Procedures

Key Component # 1



- **First step in establishing a working alone solution.**
- Every company's most reliable tactic for protecting worker health and safety.
- Provides your workforce with the resources needed to work safely.
- Prepares and educates your employees on emergency response procedures.
- Enables workers to make informed decisions and take ownership of their safety.
- Contributes to developing a culture of safety in the workplace.

Policy Development Tips



- **Protocols must be crystal-clear and easy to follow.**
- **It's essential to include a **policy purpose statement** to define:**
 - Why you have chosen to create this lone worker policy
 - How this policy will be a benefit to all members of your organization
 - The ways in which the policy fits in with your company's values and goals.
- **Define the **scope** of your policy:**
 - All employees must know to whom the lone worker policy applies.
 - Define company procedures and rules that are specific for your lone workers.
 - All members of your organization must be up to date on lone working protocols

Policy Development

Last comment - be open to amendments



Lines of communication must be kept open for feedback, in order to monitor:

- What is working?
- What isn't working?
- Are there any gaps in your current system?

Policies should not be set in stone:

- Making continuous improvements as you go is a great way to maximize policy coverage and effectiveness.

Creating a Culture of Safety in the Workplace

Key Component # 2



- **Starts with your policy and procedures.**
- Requires a company-wide mindset to observe safety policies.
- Organizations become vulnerable to financial penalties, employee injury, and diminished morale without a culture of safety.
- Requires regular engagement with employees on the subject of safety.
- Use meetings to underscore safety and its importance to the company (designated H&S Committees) AND other meetings.
- Consider regular reviews of practices and performance appraisals.
- **Lead by example!**

The System of Regular Contact

Key Component # 3

LONE WORKER SAFETY BEST PRACTICES

- ✓ We know the hazard exists.
- ✓ We've identified the associated risks.
- ✓ And we know the requirements as an employer.

- ***So, what is the best operational solution to manage this hazard?***
- *What does your company do?*

Lone Worker Monitoring Systems

In-House vs. Professional

In-house safety check systems - many challenges...

- Must be designed and developed to meet regulatory requirements.
- Rely on individuals to follow established protocols in a consistent and timely manner.
- Challenging to maintain and present an increased chance of error.
- Require manual follow-up/assessment of lone workers.
- Must be fully documented. Time-consuming and must meet the requirements of the law.
- Are costly, both in time and money spent trying to manually managing lone worker safety checks.

Lone Worker Monitoring Systems

In-House vs. Professional

Lone Worker Monitoring example:

- The lone worker calls in to the office every two hours of the day for an 8-hour shift (4 safety checks)
- An office employee answers each call and records the time of the call and where the lone worker is and will be until the next call.
- The office employee resets a timer after each call to ensure that if the lone worker does not call in, the office worker is reminded to call the lone worker.
- The time spent by office employee and lone worker to stop what they are doing, check-in and log the call, is approximately 5 minutes per call.
- Let's assume the wage of the employees involved is \$20.00 per hour.

Lone Worker Monitoring Systems

In-House vs. Professional

True Cost of Lone Worker Monitoring:

- 4 calls per day x 5 minutes x 2 employees x 20 working days in a month = 800 minutes (13.33 hours)
- 13.33 hours x \$20/hour = **\$266.67 per month spent checking on one employee working alone!**
 - Dependent upon a person trying to remember to make calls and an office employee knowing when they didn't call in.
 - What happens when the office worker calls in sick or is on holidays?
 - Every Safety Check and result must be logged so that your company has a compliance audit trail that meets the regulatory requirements

Lone Worker Monitoring Systems

Professional Solution

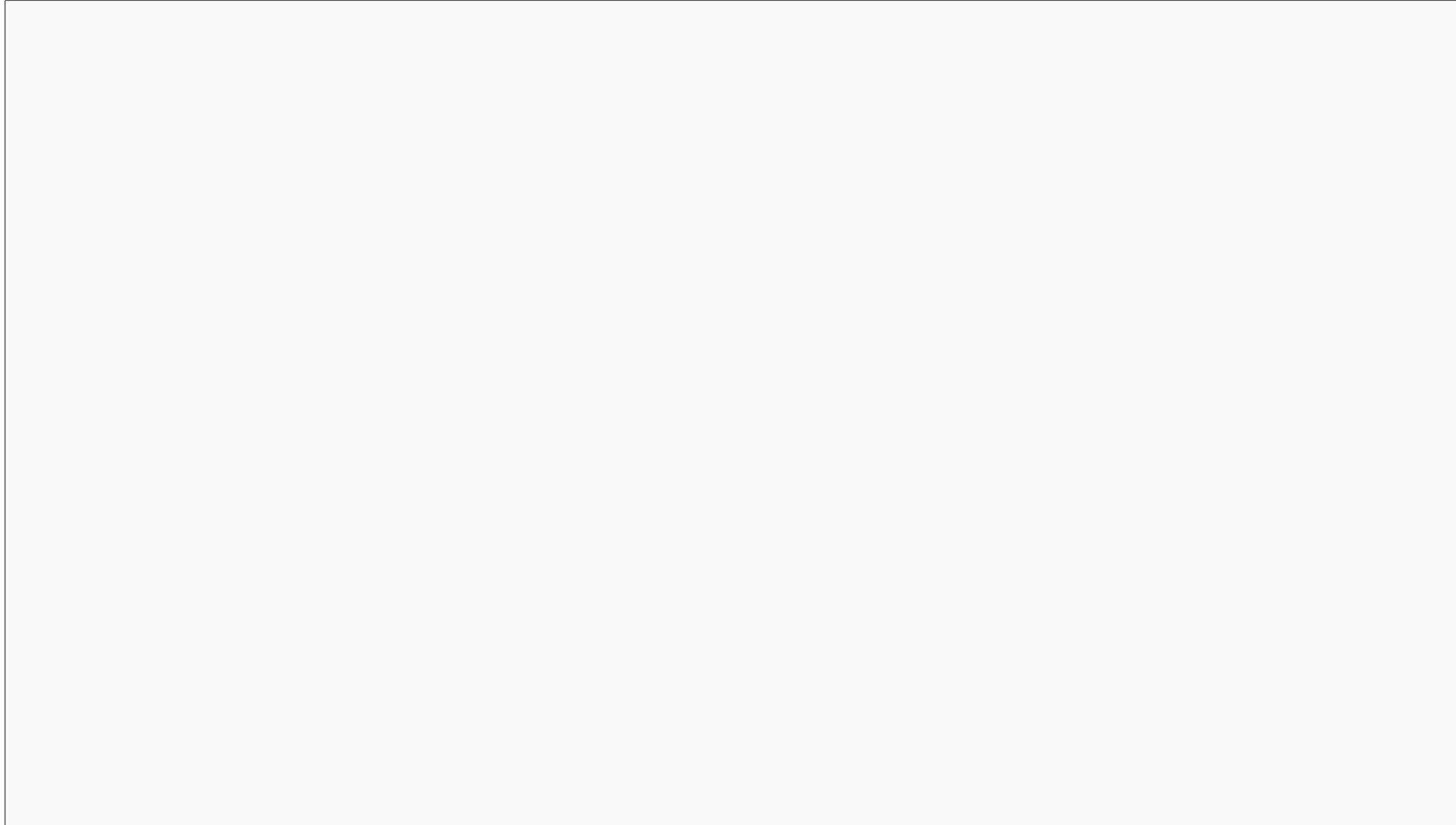
LONE WORKER SAFETY BEST PRACTICES

Professional safety check solution - key features:

- ✓ Automated safety monitoring with reliable safety check scheduling (server-based).
- ✓ Professionally trained, live-operator emergency monitoring and response during critical events.
- ✓ Intuitive, easy-to-use smartphone app with an emergency button.
- ✓ Flexible check-in options that include SMS, computer and phone.
- ✓ Flexible Safety Check frequency based on risks.
- ✓ Real-time GPS worker location tracking and/or GPS with pre-emptive location tracking.
- ✓ Location details also can be collected via written text and/or voice recordings.
- ✓ Audit reports including activations/deactivations, completed safety checks, missed safety checks and alarms. For proof of due diligence and compliance. Includes administrator dashboard.
- ✓ Text reminders and auto-activation options to improve user compliance.

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Professional System Example





Supporting Lone Workers Across North America

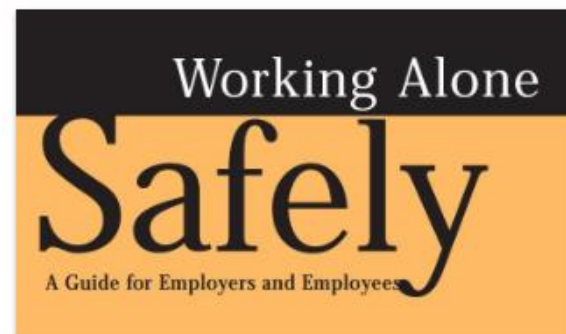
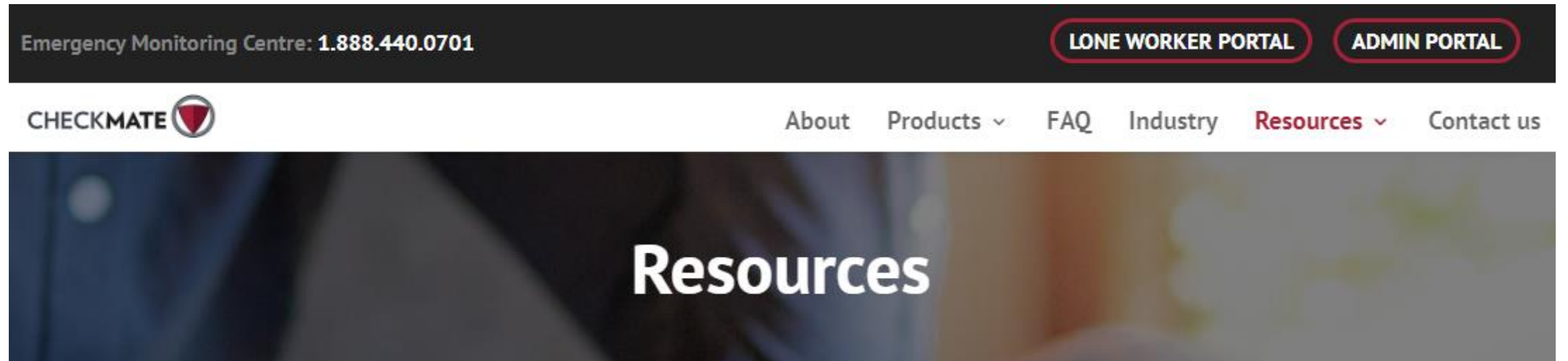
- ☑ One of the most trusted lone worker and personal safety monitoring systems in North America.
- ☑ We complete safety checks for 1000's of employees who are working alone.
- ☑ **In 2022 CheckMate Working Alone made over 3 million safety checks.**



CHECKMATE – Support Information

Website:

www.proteleccheckmate.com



Working Alone Legislation, and what it means for Employers

[View Legislation](#)



The CheckMate Blog, featuring articles that cover a wide range of employee safety concerns and solutions

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CheckMate Product User Guides and Tutorials

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Lone Worker Monitoring System Key Components Checklist

[View Checklist](#)

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Final Review and **Key Takeaways**

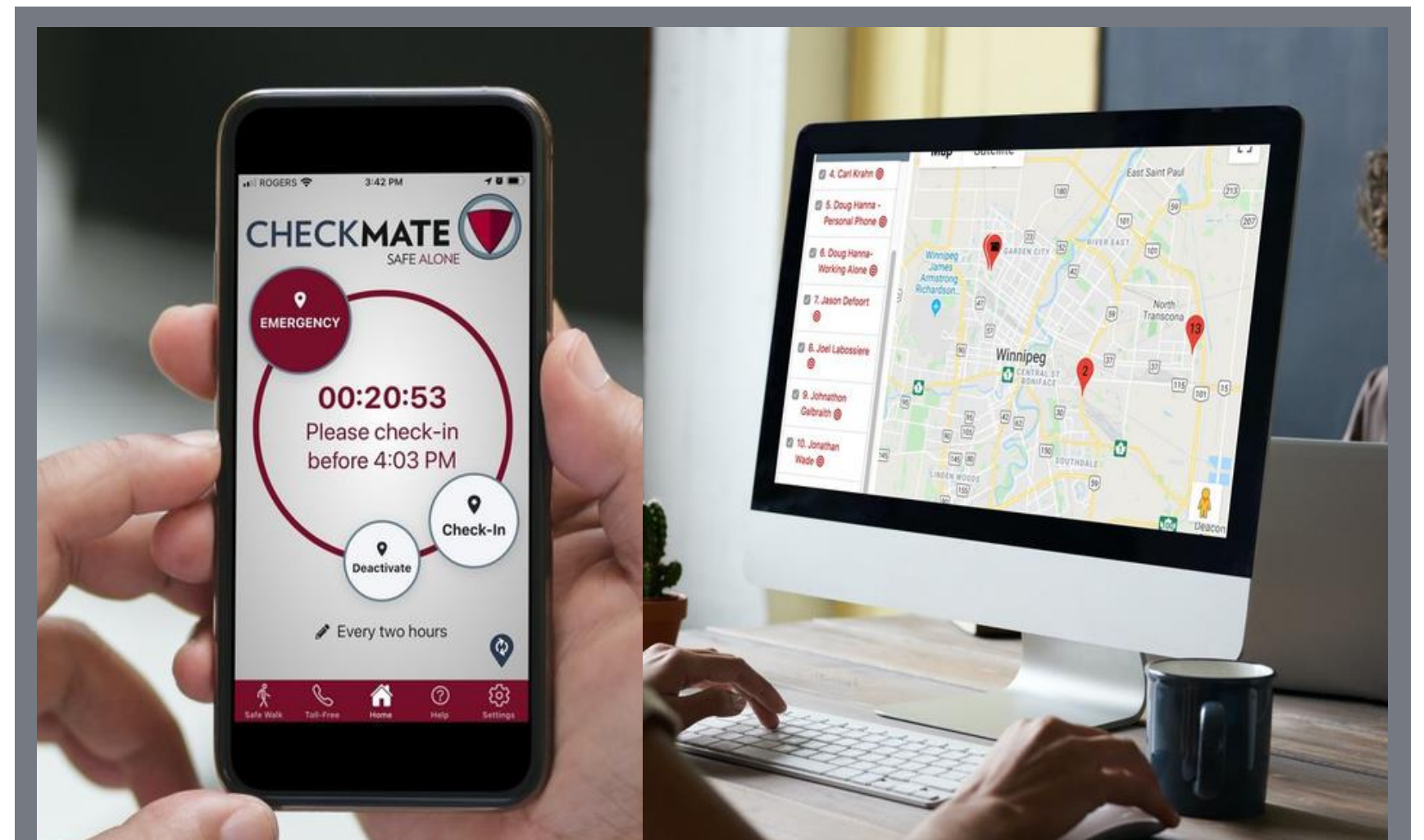
- “Working Alone” is a common hazard that must be controlled as per the regulations. It’s the law!
- In addition to assessing risks and developing clear policies and procedures, a critical component is ensuring a ‘system of regular contact’ is in place.
- The challenge... How best to do this?
- Implementing technology will ensure consistency and reliability AND will ensure your company and most importantly, your employees are protected!
- Implementing technology is a cost-effective method of managing this hazard.

Conclusion and **observations**

- Western provinces including Alberta have strong legislation and enforcement.
- Many employers are still unaware of Working Alone Legislation.
- Some employers are compromising safety using ad-hoc arrangements.
- Luckily, there is increasing awareness about Working Alone safety and how best to manage, thanks to the education and expertise that the many Alberta Safety Associations provide and through conferences/forums such as this.

Simple Working Alone Solutions for Alberta Employers

Ensuring employee safety and regulatory compliance... no matter where their work takes them!



Flexible schedules, GPS tracking, and powerful administrative tools at your fingertips.

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Thank You! Questions?

Website: www.proteleccheckmate.com

CheckMate Resources: <https://proteleccheckmate.com/resources/>

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