

Lone Worker Policy

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (Section 19) and in that regard recognizes that there are risks involved in a Lone Worker situation, which must be considered and, where possible, preventative measures taken to reduce and / or mitigate all risks identified.

Definition

Lone working can be described as any situation or location in which someone works without a colleague nearby; or when someone is working out of sight or earshot of another colleague.

Lone working can take place when people are:

- Working as individuals at a fixed site but are separated from others e.g. working alone in buildings or in interviewing situations
- Working in a remote location, including outdoors
- Working alone away from base e.g. home visiting often involving contact with the public
- Working outside normal working hours, e.g. alone in isolated buildings or working alone in the community
- Travelling alone as part of their work e.g. travelling to meetings
- Working on other employers' premises or working from home.

Many lone workers will come into more than one of these categories and each of these categories may present a different individual or combination of hazards. Staff who work alone face the same hazards in their daily work as other workers. However, for lone workers, the risk of harm is often greater. The main hazards facing lone workers are violence and aggression and lack of access to assistance in an emergency.

Policy Statement

Lone workers must ensure that they:

- Do all they can to ensure their own safety. This is in line with current health and safety legislation
- Attend any relevant training before entering a lone worker situation
- Properly utilise all appropriate technology which has been provided for their own personal safety, ensure that they attend training in the use of the technology and associated support services; and
- Report all incidents even where they consider it to be a minor incident, including 'near misses' to enable appropriate follow up action to be taken.

Risk Assessment

Lone workers must undertake and document a risk assessment. The purpose of the risk assessment process is to:

- Assess the risks to lone workers
- Implement measures to reduce the risks to lone workers, including appropriate staff training to minimise these risks
- Evaluate the control measures and ensure that risks to lone workers are appropriately managed

The following must be considered during the risk assessment process:

- Type of incident risk, for example, physical assault/theft of property or equipment

- The possibility of an increased risk of violence due to alcohol abuse, or drug misuse
- Working in or travelling between certain environments or settings
- Lone workers carrying equipment that makes them a target for theft or makes them less able to protect themselves

Lone Worker Movements

Lone workers should always ensure that someone else is aware of their movements whilst at work. This means leaving a written diary of visits which should include the addresses they will be visiting, expected arrival and departure times, the names of persons they will be meeting and visiting, details of vehicles they will be traveling in and contact telephone numbers where possible.

Lone workers should then maintain regular contact with a relevant colleague / friend and systems put in place to deal with situations where contact with a lone worker is lost.

Where there is genuine concern, as a result of a lone worker failing to attend a visit or an arranged meeting within an agreed time, or to make contact as agreed, a colleague or friend should use the information provided in the log to locate them and ascertain whether they turned up for previous appointments that day. Depending on the circumstances and whether contact through normal means (mobile phone, pager, etc) can be made the colleague / friend should involve the police, if necessary.

Management Responsibility

If it is thought that the lone worker may be at risk, it is important that matters are dealt with quickly, after considering all the available facts. If police involvement is needed, they should be given full access to information held and personnel who may hold it, if that information might help trace the lone worker and provide a fuller assessment of any risks they may be facing.

Equipment

Lone worker devices can be used as part of a range of measures aimed at protecting the lone worker although it must be recognised that devices will not prevent incidents from occurring. However, they may increase the feeling of confidence and thus reducing fear of an attack. Such devices include:

- Mobile human resource safety devices and systems which are operated using mobile technology, handsets or identity badges to raise an alarm. Some of these systems may incorporate global positioning satellites (GPS) for identifying the exact position of the device
- Personal attack alarms which emit a high pitch noise when activated to disorientate an attacker

It is essential that training or instruction in the use of any devices that are made available to them is provided. This information is normally available from the supplier of the equipment.

Incidents

All incidents involving lone workers, no matter how trivial they might seem, must be reported in line with company reporting procedures.