
Lone working Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the organisation's commitment to protect employees, contractors, and anyone required to work alone or unsupervised from risks to their health and safety, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not itself against the law, but employers must carefully consider and address any health and safety risks for people working alone.

Purpose and Objectives

- Protect all individuals required to work alone or unsupervised.
- Increase awareness of health and safety issues related to lone working.
- Ensure risks are systematically assessed and minimised.
- Provide appropriate training and support for lone workers.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all incidents.
- Reduce incidents and injuries related to lone work.
- Ensure compliance with relevant health and safety legislation and 3rd parties' best practice.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff working alone, including those in isolated areas, high-risk locations, at base, working from home or while traveling between sites.

Hazards of Lone Working

Lone workers may face increased risks, including:

- Violence and personal safety threats
- Fire evacuation difficulties
- Increased risk during lifting and handling tasks
- Communication challenges
- Remoteness or isolation
- Potential for criminal activity
- Feelings of isolation, stress, or depression

Responsibilities - Senior Managers, Line Managers, and Supervisors

- Operational management of health and safety in their areas
- Identify lone workers and ensure risk assessments are carried out and reviewed
- Assess the need for working alone
- Ensure staff are aware of risks and arrangements to reduce them
- Implement procedures and safe systems of work
- Provide appropriate information, instruction, and training
- Maintain mechanisms to account for lone workers' whereabouts

All Staff

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others
- Familiarise themselves with relevant policies and procedures
- Follow rules and procedures for safe working
- Assess potential risks and report incidents or concerns
- Attend required training
- Maintain accessible diaries of appointments
- Ensure someone knows their whereabouts and expected return

Lone Workers

- Comply with safe working procedures and measures
- Report incidents immediately to management
- Avoid unnecessary risks
- Declare any relevant medical conditions affecting suitability for lone working

Arrangements for Securing Health and Safety

Risk Assessment

- Risk assessments must be conducted by competent persons before lone working begins, considering hazards such as access, environment, equipment, and foreseeable emergencies.
- Only fit, healthy, and competent individuals will be required to work alone.
- Regular communication between lone workers and supervisors is required.
- Emergency procedures must be in place for lone workers to obtain assistance

Information, Training, and Supervision

- All lone workers will receive necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision.
- Training includes first aid, communication procedures, and emergency awareness.
- Adequate supervision will be provided, with periodic checks and contact, warning devices, and alarms as appropriate

Safe Systems of Work

Processes and instructions cover:

- Required ability, training, and medical fitness
- Suitability and provision of equipment and PPE
- Compliance with job instructions and risk assessments
- Means of communication (e.g., mobile phones, buddy systems)
- Emergency and accident procedures
- Supervision for trainees and new employees

Review frequency: Annual

Lead Officer: Office Admin

Senior Manager Responsible: Director

Defined Working Limits

- Clear procedures set limits on what can and cannot be done while working alone.
- Employees should not carry out work if in doubt and must contact their supervisor for instruction

Regulatory Compliance

- The policy aligns with Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Employers have a general duty to ensure health, safety, and welfare, including safe systems, workplaces, and arrangements for welfare

Monitoring and Review

- The lead responsible for Health and Safety will monitor implementation.
- Formal reviews will occur regularly or when legislation changes

Procedures

Lone Working Definition

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, cannot be seen or heard by others, and cannot expect assistance to be readily available

Risk Assessment Process

Risk assessments must be carried out for all lone working scenarios, following the HSE 5-step process:

1. Identify hazards
2. Assess risks
3. Control risks
4. Record findings
5. Review controls

Assessments should consider remoteness, communication, supervision, equipment, medical fitness, emergency procedures, criminal attack likelihood, and first-aid cover

Examples of Lone Working and Mobile Working

- Working alone on site, away from base, or as homeworkers
- Early starters/late finishers, reception duties, working in small offices, vocational workshops
- Attending training courses/conferences, traveling to/from meetings, staying away overnight
- Mobile workers delivering training and assessment in remote workplaces, one-to-one training sessions in domestic premises

General and Specific Hazards

- Sudden illness, accidents, emergencies, lack of immediate access to first aid
- Fire, manual handling, chemicals, hazardous substances
- Inadequate provision of rest, hygiene, welfare facilities
- Violence and abuse, intruders, theft
- Hazards specific to lone working should be identified in risk assessments

Violence and Personal Safety

- Employers must assess the risk of violence and implement measures to prevent or reduce this risk, including alternative arrangements, additional staff, or security agencies for high-risk situations
- Ongoing conflict resolution training and sharing information about individuals with a history of violence
- Procedures for meeting learners in domestic premises, reporting itineraries, and emergency communications

Home Working

- Employers must ensure the home workplace is safe for the kind of work being done, including risk assessment and provision of proper equipment

Working in Isolation and Remote Locations

Risk assessments should be considered:

- Safe travel to and from the workplace
- Frequency of reporting in and procedures if contact is lost
- Access to facilities and first aid
- Emergency procedures and ease of access for emergency services

Driving at Work

- Risks include fatigue, long hours, breakdowns in isolated areas, and insurance coverage
- Employers should ensure staff using personal vehicles for work have appropriate insurance and training
- Adequate time allowances and limits on journeys should be set

Employer Legal Duties

- Employers must identify, assess, and control risks from lone working
- Maintain permanent records of risk assessments where required
- Provide first aid, welfare provisions, suitable equipment, and training
- Report certain accidents and violent incidents as required by law
- Consult safety representatives on risk assessment processes

Working on Another Employer's Premises

- Risk assessments must cover risks from working alone and any hazards to others
- Employers must cooperate and coordinate health and safety arrangements

Information, Instruction, Training, and Supervision

- Employers must provide adequate information, instruction, training, and supervision for lone workers
- Systems for monitoring lone workers and procedures for reporting to base must be established

Caseloads and Unsociable Hours

- Agreements should be reached on maximum caseloads and unsociable hours, ensuring fair compensation, rest breaks, and compliance with working time regulations

Travel and Homeworking Arrangements

- Staff should be compensated for extra costs incurred from home or road working
- Appropriate equipment and facilities must be provided
- Travel time and mileage costs should be covered