

# **ELECTED MEMBER LONE WORKING GUIDANCE**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Lone workers are defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as, “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision” such as:

- single occupants of premises, such as someone in sole charge of an office in a remote location;
- people operating, on their own, away from base
- people working out of normal hours e.g. evenings and weekends

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- ensuring people are aware of procedures, safe systems of work and risk assessments relating to lone working;
- ensuring that procedures are developed and effectively employed to address contact / communication issues and emergency response;
- ensuring that people can access suitable and effective support following any hazardous incident;
- ensuring people take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions;
- attending any appropriate training and instruction sessions;
- ensuring that relevant practical skills are regularly refreshed.

## **3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 Risk assessments should be used to identify whether the work can be carried out safely and those areas where lone working magnifies the risks presented by the hazards. It must also identify those control measures that should be employed to ensure the person’s health and safety.
- 3.2 Risk assessments should be undertaken by people who have knowledge of the tasks and associated hazards that are being assessed or who have the assistance of persons with this knowledge. They should be completed prior the commencement of the task or activity.

## **4. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

- 4.1 There should be robust systems in place to deal with foreseeable emergencies and their aftermath.
- 4.2 Such emergencies may include:
  - a. Fire;
  - b. Explosion;
  - c. Violent attack;
  - d. Gas leak;
  - e. Electrocution;
  - f. Sudden ill health;
  - g. Asphyxia;
  - h. Flood;

- i. Structural collapse;
- j. Road traffic accident.

4.3 Some emergencies are much more likely to occur than others, but generic systems should where possible cover all eventualities. Systems should be in place to quickly get adequate assistance to a lone worker who becomes involved in such events.

4.4 Out of hours emergencies should be considered i.e. in the evenings and at weekends.

## **6. INFORMATION SHARING**

6.1 The risk to lone workers when visiting people can be reduced if they are aware of any previous violent behaviour, from that particular person towards another. Such information must be based on fact and not hearsay.

## **7. TRAINING**

7.1 Adequate training for lone workers is an important part of ensuring their continued well-being. Such training may include:

- a. Safe systems of work for lone workers;
- b. Emergency procedures;
- c. Basic 1<sup>st</sup> aid;
- d. Stress relief measures
- e. Techniques for dealing with difficult, distressed or disturbed persons;
- f. Techniques for diffusing difficult situations;
- g. Dealing with complaints;
- h. What can and cannot be undertaken when working alone;
- i. Use of communications equipment;
- j. Use of personal alarms.

## 7.2 Other considerations should cover:

- a. How to provide support to lone workers;
- b. How to supervise remotely;
- c. The maintenance of effective early warning systems and implementing protocols and procedures for preventing and monitoring risks associated with work-related violence.
- d. How to provide effective back-up in the event of an alarm call or request for help;
- e. Accident and incident reporting and investigation.

## **Risk Assessment Requirements**

When carrying out risk assessments on tasks undertaken by lone workers, the following points should be considered:

1. Does the venue/location present a special risk to the lone worker? Consideration should be given to; violence and aggression, travelling to and from appointments, visiting peoples' homes. Severe weather should also be taken into consideration.
2. Is there a safe way in and out for a lone person? Emergencies such as fire, physical injury and sudden illness must be considered.
3. Is there a risk of violence? This could be from a constituent, their relations or associates. It may even be a random occurrence, not connected with the particular work activity.
4. Are women or young/inexperienced workers especially at risk if they work alone?
5. Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
6. Is any special or additional training required?
7. Are task parameters clearly defined?
8. Are there suitable levels of supervision in place? Consideration must be given to the amount and type of indirect and occasional direct supervision that should be employed.
9. Possible control measure that could be considered, include:
  - a. Adequate training and instruction, including refreshers;
  - b. Induction and supervision;
  - c. Periodic site visits by colleagues;
  - d. Carrying and use of mobile phones / 2 way radio / personal alarms;
  - e. Recording work plan details;
  - f. Informing pre-arranged person of all itinerary changes;
  - g. Systems for reporting in before and after appointments or at pre-arranged periodicity;
  - h. Use of telephone "buddy" systems;
  - i. Systems for reporting concerns and getting assistance when staff have not reported in;
  - j. Clear instruction to abort visits if people feel uneasy;
  - k. Avoiding the carriage of valuables and large sums of money;
  - l. Suitable first aid kit.

### **LONE WORKING SAFE PROCEDURES CHECKLIST**

Below is a checklist, which has been designed to help ensure peoples' health and safety. This may appear to be common sense but each check should be considered carefully before leaving to undertake lone working.

<b>Checklist</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>
Directions to site – do you know where you are going?	
Are weather conditions safe for intended journey <u>and</u> destination?	
Do you know the person / premises that you are visiting?	
Personal protective equipment – is your equipment suitable for intended tasks? <i>Hard hat; safety boots; safety clothing; personal alarm; 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit; etc.</i>	
Consider purpose of task – if a danger is known to exist, is it wise to go alone? <i>Special consideration must be given where the visit involves meeting a person who is known to be aggressive or a situation where discussion may become heated.</i>	
Have you left a detailed itinerary including timings, with your colleagues or other responsible person? <i>In / out board; Phone in; Buddy system. Inform colleagues of all changes of plan and / or timings.</i>	
Means of contact – Have you a mobile phone, is number known to others? <i>Your mobile must be switched on at all times that you are working alone, therefore it essential that the battery pack is kept fully charged. It may be appropriate to have it set to silent, with vibrate alert selected.</i>	

## **REPORTING IN SYSTEMS**

All lone worker reporting and control systems are only of use if they are meticulously followed. It is essential that people pass and record information to their colleagues.

If contact is lost with a person a system must be in place to contact them and if required provide them with emergency assistance. Such losses of contact maybe due to mobile telephone signals being lost or batteries running low, which probably would not constitute an emergency. However, it may be caused by a violent attack or a road traffic accident, both of which might have dire consequences.

### **Booking In and Out Board / Register**

It is usually prudent to work this system in conjunction with reporting in by telephone at pre-arranged times. Like most systems it is highly dependent on people being meticulous in their use of the system. The following key points must be observed to ensure that the system works well:

- A register should be developed, this can be on a white board, paper based or on a computer. This register should show:

Name	Where Working	Contact details	Client	Arrival Time	Expected Return Time	Last Contact	Next Contact Due	Comments

- The register must always be annotated whenever the person is lone working.
- It must be updated regularly.
- When the working starts from home or finishes at home, they must phone in to allow the register to be updated.
- The register must be checked at frequent intervals, at least once per hour, to ensure that lone workers have not missed their pre-arranged reporting slots.

### **Phoning In**

Phone contact is an essential part of the previous system and can be a useful way of keeping in touch and allowing colleagues to be aware of a person's whereabouts.

Phone based systems should be run in conjunction with a Booking In / Out Register.

### **Lone Working Out of Hours**

Working alone out with office hours requires suitable reporting systems to ensure the health and safety of people. The following system can be considered:

- People who are responsible for colleagues who work alone, out with normal office hours, should ensure that they have a clear indication of when they should be expected home.
- If they are to be late home, the lone worker should inform their colleagues' point of contact and inform them of the change.

- If they have not returned home within 30 minutes of their expected time of arrival and has not made contact/cannot be contacted, a member of their family must contact the lone worker's point of contact.
- The point of contact will attempt to make contact with the worker via mobile phone or the relevant service-user's home telephone number.
- If contact cannot be made, they should contact the police and request assistance in tracking the worker.