

# **LONE WORKER POLICY**

## **Introduction**

People who work by themselves, either on a regular, permanent or occasional basis can be at greater risk from assaults and accidents than other workers. This guidance is to assist managers and staff, to reduce the risk of harm occurring to lone workers.

With proper management and control of the risks those who work alone can be as safe as everyone else at work can.

## **Who is a lone worker?**

Lone workers are simply those people who work by themselves, without close or direct supervision. This situation can occur in fixed establishments, where one person works in an area separate from others, or works outside of the normal office hours. More frequently it is staff working away from their fixed base e.g. maintenance workers.

People will generally know when they are working alone, but there are situations where even when an office is normally crowded, people can be working in isolation e.g. in a meeting or interview room.

## **Risk assessment**

The need to assess the risks associated with any work activity applies to, staff who work alone. The risk assessment process is the responsibility of managers, and this will ensure that the hazards and level of risks are identified, and if necessary action taken to avoid and/or control the risks.

Control measures may include; issuing safe working instructions, training, supervision, issuing personal protective equipment. Managers should ensure that control measures are implemented. The risk assessment should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is always kept up to date if situations change.

It is important that employees are consulted on the risk assessment, as they can provide valuable information and advice. Where risk assessments identify that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place.

If a lone worker carries out their work at another employer's site, information should be provided about any risks for the manager to carry out the risk assessment and ensure that the right action is taken to ensure the safety of the lone worker.

## **Lone worker advice**

It is impossible to identify all of the hazards that a lone worker may face, many may be transient in nature. It is important to protect staff against all known risks and to equip them with adequate training and information to assist them in dealing with any risky situations that they may encounter ranging from dealing with aggressive clients to entering an unsafe building. Specific safe working arrangements should be implemented and developed.

The following may be drawn from for local guidance.

### **Lone working in premises**

- Ensure that you know relevant emergency procedures and can act appropriately when an alarm is raised
- Be aware of any other procedures intended for your safety and use them.
- If dealing with clients/the public find out if there have been problems that may affect your safety and use them- if in doubt, have another member of staff available.
- Know where and how to obtain help if needed, e.g. first aid assistance.
- Know the security measures for your workplace and use them correctly.

### **Lone working in the community**

- Ensure that your line manager knows your intended movements and inform them if they change.
- Ensure that any communication device, such as a telephone, or alarm, works and that it is checked regularly.
- Plan your route to avoid quiet streets, dark areas and possible dangerous areas.
- Use well frequented streets on your route.
- When travelling at night stay in well lit areas.
- If travelling by car, park as close to the site you are visiting as possible.
- Do not leave items within clear sight in a vehicle.
- If you feel threatened in any way, do not continue to your destination.

### **Visiting other people and unknown premises**

- Ensure that your line manager/colleague is aware of your intended visit and inform them if there is any problem or changes.
- Follow the procedures for maintaining contact with your manager.
- If you have doubts about potential risks, from the place or person you are planning to visit, check if **it** is safe to visit alone.
- Try not to visit alone for the first time, and especially not after dark.
- Do not allow any doors to be locked behind you.
- Always follow other people into a room and make sure your exit is clear.
- Be aware of dogs, other animals or other people at the site.
- Suggest that dogs and other animals be kept in a separate room if possible.
- If you are in any doubt about your safety, do not enter the premises.
- Be aware of your surroundings and look out for unstable or slippery surfaces,
- Do not under any circumstances enter confined spaces or dangerous structures.
- Report incidents or hazardous conditions.

### **Manual handling**

- Avoid manual handling, if at all possible, by using mechanical aids,
- Always assess the situation, and if there is any doubt about the safety of carrying out a manual handling task, do not do it.
- Follow good practice handling technique as you have been advised in your training and safe working instructions.
- If the task requires more than one person, do not do it until assistance is provided.

### **Working at home**

- Develop a routine; this will help to avoid stress.
- Communicate regularly with your line manager.
- Be aware of any hazards around and inside the house.
- Know what to do in an emergency situation.

- Check that equipment is safe to use.
- Follow the good practice as advised in your safe working instructions.

### **Other risks**

It is not always possible to be prepared for every eventuality but you need to be aware and judge the risks and take appropriate action. If you are unsure of what to do, talk to your manager. **Above all do not put yourself at risk, if there is any danger stop work or leave the location.**

### **What to do if an incident occurs**

- Try to remain calm.
- In a potentially violent situation, talk quietly, as your training advises.
- Whenever possible, remove yourself from the scene as soon as possible.
- Do not attack an potential assailant, - run away if possible towards a friendly group or busy and well populated area.
- If you witness an incident, try to remember as much as you can to help in any investigation.
- Report the incident immediately to your manager.
- Complete an incident report form and follow your reporting procedures.
- Report the incident to the police, if necessary.