

Community Matters

Information sheet

Lone Working

Who are lone workers and what jobs do they do?

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision

In fixed establishments:

- A person working alone in a small workshop, office, or hall
- People working on their own outside normal hours, e.g. caretakers, cleaners and security
- maintenance or repair staff

Establishing a healthy and safe working environment for lone workers can be different from organising the health and safety of other employees. They should not be put at more risk than other people working for you.

It will often be safe to work alone. However, the law requires employers to think about ,and deal with, any health and safety risks before people are allowed to do so.

Things you could consider to help ensure lone workers are not put at risk include:

1. Assessing areas of risk including violence, manual handling, the medical suitability of the individual to work alone and whether the workplace itself presents a risk to them
2. Requirements for training, levels of experience and how best to monitor and supervise them
3. Making sure you know what is happening, including having systems in place to keep in touch with them

Notes

Use your risk assessment (that highlighted lone working as a risk – such as an individual securing the premises at the end of the day, or a staff member who has to respond to intruder alarm activation out of normal working hours) as a starting point in creating a simple policy. Consider the following sections:

- Policy statement – outline dedication to fulfilling legal requirements
- Definition – when do you consider staff to be lone working – i.e. working late or remotely
- Lone worker risk assessment
- Procedures and measures that you have put in place – what actions have you taken and what are your expectations from staff
- The purpose of the policy – focus on the benefits to the staff members welfare and safety to encourage compliance
- Responsibilities of each employee including management and lone workers – be clear where responsibilities lie
- How to report hazards or incidents
- Additional help and support – internal and external such as <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/>

As a lone worker will not as easily being able to seek advice and support it is essential that they are given appropriate training and have sufficient experience to undertake the role.

The risk associated with the work must also consider the individual and whether they are more vulnerable, for example – are they, young, pregnant, disabled or a trainee?

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Monitoring should also be carefully considered and may include:

- pre-agreed intervals of regular contact between the lone worker and supervisor, using phones, radios or email
- manually operated or automatic warning devices which trigger if specific signals are not received periodically from the lone worker, eg staff security systems;
- implementing robust system to ensure a lone worker has returned to their base or home once their task is completed.

The HSE have more information about Lone Working here:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm>

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