

Health & Safety Arrangements For Management of Lone Working

Management Procedure and Guidance

Introduction

Wirral Council recognises that accidents and incidents can arise from situations where staff work alone. These arrangements provide managers and supervisors with guidance in managing lone working situations. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of managers of staff working alone and the risk assessment procedure and controls measures that must be followed including providing instruction, information and training.

Definition(s)

The Health and Safety Executive define lone working as *“Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, either employees who work separately from others within an establishment or mobile workers who work away from a fixed base”*

Risk Assessment

Although there is no specific legislation in relation to lone working, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to carry out a risk assessment in relation to all significant hazards faced by its employees.

Consideration must be given to the potential risks faced by lone workers, and the control measures that must be put into place to avoid or control the risks to staff. **(See appendix 1 for who is at risk and how staff can be harmed)**

Assessing the risks

Having identified the lone workers and lone working situations, managers must determine whether any existing controls are adequate or whether more needs to be done. This should be formally documented using the [Risk Assessment Form M34](#) to record the risks to which their staff are exposed. This assessment should take into account the risk inherent in the task, the environment, any other additional risks associated with the fact that the member of staff is working on their own and should consider any existing arrangements in place to manage the hazards faced by lone workers. **(see appendix 2 for control measures)**

Risk Controls

Having assessed and recorded all the risks, which affect lone workers, both in an establishment and away from the workplace and considered any existing controls in place, managers should consider whether these controls are sufficient or whether more needs to be done. Managers must take account of the extent that existing controls are being followed / implemented.

Managers are responsible to ensure that lone workers have received sufficient information, training and instruction regarding the potential risks they face and the controls measures in place. **(See appendix 4 for basic lone working information)**

Staff should also be encouraged to seek advice / assistance if they are unsure about a situation or to report any problems / concerns via a line manager.

Having undertaken the risk assessment, recorded and implemented all necessary controls, it is important that all lone working situations are monitored and continually reviewed.

Wirral Community Patrol operates a lone worker tracking system, which can be used within and outside normal office hours.

Staff Procedure

If at any time you feel your safety is compromised in any way or that a situation may become unsafe or violent, always speak to your Manager and obtain further advice.

All staff have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. You also have a responsibility to bring to the attention of your manager, any deficiencies with these health and safety arrangements

If at any time during a visit you feel vulnerable or that your safety is compromised in any way, calmly try to leave without making the person become more agitated, (even if this means making an excuse).

(See appendix 3 for staff checklist)

Links to other policies & arrangements

These arrangements should be read in conjunction with;

- Council Health and safety policy, which identifies the roles and responsibilities of all employees and managers
- Health and Safety Management Arrangements for Risk Assessments
- Bullying and Harassment procedures
- Health & Safety Management Arrangements for Agile Working
- Health & Safety Management Arrangements for Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedures
- Arrangements for referral to Occupational Health Unit

Appendix 1

Who is at risk from lone working?

Step one in assessing the risks is to identify those members of staff who are at any time required to work alone, or those who work alone within the workplace, visiting other premises and travelling between sites.

Examples of lone workers include:

- Staff with responsibility for opening up and closing buildings
- Maintenance and domestic staff
- Staff working outside normal working hours e.g. shift or night workers
- Staff visiting service users in their own home
- Staff accompanying and supporting service users in the community
- Staff working in an isolated part of the building
- Contractors who are working alone within council buildings
- Staff who work at home (agile workers)

The above list is by no means exhaustive.

How might lone workers be harmed?

The next step is to identify how lone workers might be harmed or their health, safety and welfare put at risk. Working alone need not present any greater risk to staff than working in a team situation or busy environment. All reasonable foreseeable hazards arising from work activities should be assessed as a matter of course and control measures put in place to avoid harm.

Some hazards are more significant where staff work alone, for example:

- Working at height or near unprotected edges or where there is a risk of falling
 - Working on live electrical systems or conductors
 - Working near water
 - Working in confined spaces
 - Working with hazardous substances
 - Contact with unknown/potentially violent customers or service users
 - Working with equipment or machinery
 - Working in noisy environments
 - Lifting or carrying loads/setting up equipment
 - Fire hazards
 - Undertaking security activities
 - Transporting/collecting cash
 - Working in areas known to suffer anti social problems or with high crime rates or where individuals may be encountered that have been the subject of enforcement
 - Exposure to extreme temperatures or weather conditions
 - Employees that have a medical condition, physical or psychological, which may put them at higher risk of harm when working alone
- The above list is by no means exhaustive.

Control Measures

The following checklist provides information on what controls may be in place:

- Access to the building is adequately controlled
- A visitor control system in place
- Systems and procedures are in place for knowing who staff are with
- There are suitable communication systems in place for lone workers to summon help or raise the alarm
- There are procedures to check on a colleague who is alone with a member of the public or working alone within a building
- A panic alarm is fitted within high risk areas
- Safe systems of work are in place for those handling cash or opening and closing building
- There is regular contact with lone workers
- There are procedures in place if contact cannot be established
- Emergency procedures have been identified and communicated to staff
- Staff at risk of personal attack have received training in conflict resolution and personal safety

Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person?

Lone workers should not be put at more risk than other employees. In order to achieve this, extra risk control measures may be necessary. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

Managers should identify situations/activities where people work alone and ask questions such as:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a safe way in and out for one person?
- Can any necessary temporary access equipment, such as portable ladders be safely handled by one person?
- Can all the machinery and goods involved in the workplace be safely handled by one person?
- Are there chemicals or hazardous substances being used that may pose a risk to the worker
- Does the work involve lifting objects too large for one person?
- Is more than one person needed to operate essential controls safe running of equipment or workplace transport?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are young, pregnant or disabled workers particularly at risk if they work alone?
- Are there any other reasons why the individual (for example a trainee) may be more vulnerable than others?
- If the lone workers first language is NOT English, are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communication, especially in an emergency?

Staff Procedure

The following is a checklist for staff to use when working alone:

- Have you signed in/out from your location?
- Do other staff know where you are going?
- Do staff know how long you will be, your estimated time of return?
- Is there a contingency plan in place with colleagues if your overdue?
- Have you planned your journey?
- Can you get in contact with others or them with you?
- Do you need a panic alarm, is one available if required?
- If the person(s) you are visiting is considered potentially violent, has a recent history of violence, or the reason for seeing them into your office rather than visit them at home, or visit with a colleague?
- If you are conducting an interview within a clients home, always try and stay located nearest the door, in case you need to make a quick escape.
- Are you familiar with the risk assessment and controls for the task or activity that you are undertaking? Has your manager explained the measure in place to prevent an accident?
- Have you had training for the work you are undertaking?

Employee Guidance About Working Alone

Working alone includes any activity that is carried out away from supervisors or colleagues for a significant part of the time

People who work alone may face unexpected dangers. Your manager can help put safety measures in place, but may not be able to protect you from every danger. It's part of your job to look after your own health and safety by keeping alert and following proper procedures.

Your security

If you face violent or threatening behaviour from a member of the public, or a client in their home, you need to know how to behave to reduce the risks to your safety

Your manager will assess how best to provide you with a safe and secure method of contacting colleagues on a regular basis and in an emergency. For example, you might:

- Carry a personal alarm or mobile phone
- Let someone know when you are due to arrive and leave
- Make regular contact throughout the work period
- Tell your contact person if your routine changes

Your safety

There are more dangers when you work alone, there is no one there to help if you have an accident or suffer a sudden illness. You need to be aware and alert to recognise and avoid dangers. You also need to know how to get help, fast.

Know the risks of your job.

Being aware of the danger in your work is the only way to learn how to avoid them. A risk assessment will look at the following aspects of your job.

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment helps identify and reduce and remove the particular dangers in your job. You can contribute to the risk assessment if you feel something has been forgotten or missed off.

Remember you know how to do the job so make sure you get involved.

Learn the procedures for dealing with unexpected events. In an emergency, you will need to react quickly and calmly. Find out:

- The safest route out of the building
- How to raise the alarm if you need to
- How to contact the emergency services

Always make sure you know how to get first aid if you need it, or know where to find first aid supplies. Your manager may need to give you your own kit. This would be dependant on the risk assessment.



Personal alarm

Mobile phone

Contact and Security Procedures

Always use the security systems in place. These might include signing in and out of buildings, using identity passes or keeping contact with your supervisor or with the office.

Chief Executive Steve Maddox "There is nothing so urgent or important that we cannot take time to do it safely"