

Lone Working Health and Safety Policy and Procedure

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. It is inevitable that at certain times staff, students and others will find themselves working alone.
- 1.2. These duties require the identification of the hazards in the work, formal assessment of any significant risks involved, and devising and implementing safe working arrangements to ensure that the risks are either eliminated or adequately controlled.
- 1.3. Many staff and students work alone at some time during their working periods in the majority of cases they do so without significant risk. For example, persons working alone in offices carrying out typical office activities outside normal working hours are unlikely to be at significant risk, provided appropriate fire precautions and communications are in place. However, there are occasions when it is not possible to devise arrangements for work to be done safely by one person. In these cases, alternative arrangements involving help or back-up have to be put into place.
- 1.4. This document lays down guidelines to assess which tasks may be undertaken by a lone worker and which may not.

2.0 Definitions

2.1. Lone Worker

Persons are to be considered working alone if they have neither visual nor audible communication with someone who can summon assistance in the event of an accident or illness.

2.2. Normal Working Hours

Normal working hours apply.

2.3. Who?

- office staff;
- management or Directors;
- working from home;
- trainers/assessors/tutors;
- staff travelling to meetings and/or appointments

3.0 Responsibilities

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Business as an employer has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees. There is also contained in the legislation a general duty of care to protect students and members of the public. These requirements are applicable to all work situations, including where staff (and others) are working alone or outside normal working hours.

3.1. Director Responsibilities

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place to eliminate the risk from lone working where possible and effectively manage lone working in their areas of responsibility.

3.2. Line Manager Responsibilities

The Directors meet their responsibility by delegating to line managers or supervisors who have the responsibility to ensure that:

- All lone working activities are formally identified and appropriate risk assessments undertaken, which identify the risk to lone workers and the control measures necessary to minimise those risks, as far as reasonably practicable.
- Arrangements for lone working are communicated effectively and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone is explicit.
- The lone worker is made aware of the hazards and understands all the necessary control measures that need to be put in place.
- Reasonable enquiries are made to ensure that the lone worker is medically fit to undertake the work alone.
- Adequate supervision, instruction and training are in place and that the lone worker is competent. The extent of the supervision is a management decision, which should be established through the risk assessment process. It should not be left to individual members of staff or students to decide if they require assistance/supervision.
- Monitoring of lone working practices is in place to ensure that control measures identified in the lone working risk assessment are being adhered to.

3.3. Employee or Associate Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own safety and to co-operate with Business procedures. Employees should not knowingly place themselves in situations which expose them to additional risk by working alone. If a person finds that they are placed in a situation which may be considered to be that of a 'lone worker', then they should ensure that their line manager or Supervisor is made aware of the circumstances at the earliest opportunity and then assist in the process of identifying the steps needed to either prevent the lone worker situation from arising, or, if this is not possible, assist in developing the precautions necessary to ensure their own safety.

Lone workers have a responsibility to inform their line manager if they have any concerns over the effectiveness and efficiency of the agreed arrangements and also if there are any reasons why they would not be able to work alone or to continue to work alone in safety.

3.4. Student Responsibilities

Students must adhere to this policy but also that of their employer. Where they are lone working they should have had a risk assessment undertaken and control measures put in place.

4.0 Prohibitions on Lone Working

Lone working must not be undertaken where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk that the work might result in an accident which would be sufficiently serious to require a second person to be available to summon help.

Those tasks which are deemed unacceptable to be performed by a lone worker under any circumstances must be documented in the written record of risk assessments kept by Achieving Excellence.

5.0 Situations Where Lone Working is Prohibited by Law

NOT APPLICABLE

6.0 Safe Working Arrangements for Lone Workers

Establishing safe working arrangements for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other staff or students. The obvious question that has to be asked is whether the risks of the work can be adequately controlled by one person, or are more people necessary?

- Lone workers should not be exposed to **significantly** higher risks than others who work together. Precautions should take account of normal working conditions and foreseeable emergency situations, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. All situations where staff and students may be working alone should be identified and the following questions asked.

Will situations which are legally prohibited arise? Does the workplace represent a special risk to the lone worker?

- For example, when travelling to and from appointments, or when in care homes

Is there safe access and exit for that person?

- At home or clients premises is the lone worker aware of actions in the event of a fire or other emergency?

Can one person safely handle all the plant and equipment needed?

- It may be heavy, awkward, unstable, large, etc. More than one person may be necessary to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.

Can all substances and materials involved in the work be handled safely by one person?

- Not applicable

7.0 Medical Fitness

Existing medical conditions should be considered when conducting any assessment for both routine work and foreseeable emergencies. Emergencies may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

8.0 Training

Risk assessments should help to determine the level of training needed for each type of work. A record of all training received must be kept.

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision in order to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. It may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations, and lone workers, therefore, need to understand fully the risks involved in the work and the necessary precautions, and be sufficiently experienced. Departments

should, therefore, establish clear procedures to set limits as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone, and, where appropriate, when to stop the work and seek advice.

9.0 Supervision

Although a risk assessment may indicate that a lone worker may not need continual accompaniment, the extent of supervision required depends upon the risks involved and the proficiency and experience of the person carrying out the work to identify and handle safety issues. Persons new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job which presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied at first.

Young persons, under 18 years of age, will generally not work alone in the Business.

The extent of supervision required is a management decision; it should not be left to individuals to decide if they require assistance.

10.0 Illness, Accidents and Emergencies

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly in emergency situations. Emergency procedures should be established and the persons given clear and concise training and instructions on how to implement them. Similar information should be given to contractors or service engineers who may be working alone.

11.0 Communications

Suitable systems should be devised to monitor the conditions of lone workers and include at least a check at the end of the working period. In addition, it may be necessary to consider:

- Procedures where a member of supervisory staff periodically visits and visually monitors lone workers.
- Procedures where regular contact between the lone worker and a member of supervisory staff or the Campus Control Room is maintained using a telephone for out of hours working.