Watton Town Council Lone working Policy and Guidance

Adopted May 2017 – Reviewed by the HR Committee in April 2018

Next review date	Date actually reviewed
May 2019	

Introduction

This document contains corporate standards and guidance on lone working. It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that lone working issues are managed in line with this document, in any area under their control.

Any additional guidance specific to departmental issues or activities will be attached to this document.

Managers' Checklist – Lone working

The checklist below identifies key actions involved in controlling the health and safety risks arising from lone working.

1. Have you identified lone working activities within areas under your control?

2. Has a risk assessment of these lone working activities been carried out?

3. Has the risk assessment identified any activities that are not safe to be carried out by a lone worker?

4. Have you identified any additional control measures that are required and have these control measures been implemented?

5. Has a written lone working procedure been developed and communicated to relevant staff?

6. Have lone workers been categorised into one of the risk categories outlined in Appendix A?

7. Are the mandatory controls identified for that risk category in place for your staff?

Lone working activities

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'. Lone workers may be found in a range of situations:

- People in fixed establishments where:
  - Only one person works at the premises.
  - People work separately from others, e.g. in isolated areas of a site.
  - People work outside normal hours, e.g. maintenance staff.

- Mobile, or peripatetic workers operating away from their fixed base:
  - On construction, maintenance or inspection activities.
  - 'Drivers' working across counties, fitters called to sites, night working for drivers & fitters both civil & rail.

Lone working risk assessment

Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, a risk assessment of lone working tasks **must** be carried out.

Lone working issues may be considered as part of an overall risk assessment of a job role or activity. However, where lone working has not been considered as part of other risk assessments, a specific risk assessment must be carried out. To assist in this process a Lone Working Risk Assessment Form is provided with this guidance.

The findings of the risk assessment should be used to categorise the lone working activities as outlined in Appendix A.

Identifying lone working tasks and activities

The first stage in the risk assessment process is to identify known and foreseeable lone working tasks and activities.

It is recognised that the hazards presented by a particular lone working task may vary, e.g. Changes to work activates, locations. The factors that could make a task more hazardous should be identified when listing lone working activities (e.g. injuries sustained but unable to obtain help, incidents relating to drivers of 3rd parties).

Where lone working has the potential to lead to violence and aggression it is essential to identify the causes in order to prevent it. It is recommended that the following areas are considered in the risk assessment:

The client – anything the client brings to the situation that could contribute towards violence, for example, previous history/lack of history.

The employee – factors which may increase or decrease the chances of violence occurring, for example, level of training and experience, representing authority.

What the work involves – the interaction which takes place between employee and client, for example, enforcing rules, carrying out inspections.

Working environment – this involves looking at the physical setting in which the work is carried out, for example, a home visit, rural areas.

Can lone working activities be carried out safely?

Once lone working tasks have been identified, the next stage in the process is to determine if a lone worker can carry out the activities safely. The issues that need to be considered to determine if one person can adequately control the risks from lone working activities include:

- Do the places where the person will work present a special hazard, because of the nature of the area itself? (This may be a particular issue for maintenance and construction personnel.)
- Can all the plant, equipment, substances and other goods be safely used and handled by one person?
- Is there a foreseeable risk of violence and aggression?
- Is there a means of communication and/or summoning assistance?

(Please note that separate guidance is available on violence and cash handling.)

Tasks that are unsafe to be carried out by a lone worker
In circumstances where, even with all the controls in place, the risk assessment identifies that it is not possible for a task to be carried out safely by a lone worker, then it should only be done by two people.

Is the person medically fit to work alone?
Some individuals may have medical conditions that make them unsuitable for working alone. These may include unstable health conditions, such as unstable epilepsy or diabetes. The consideration of medical conditions should include both routine activities and foreseeable emergencies, which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

Please contact your Departmental Personnel team for further guidance on obtaining Occupational Health advice.

Where Lone working cannot be avoided, the lone workers should be categorised as outlined in Appendix A and the appropriate control measures introduced.

Categorising the Risks to Lone Workers

Introduction

In order to clarify the control measures which are required for the different types of lone working, a categorisation process is used to discriminate between the differing levels of risk. The actual nature of the work that would fall into each category will vary across the departments and is outlined in more detail in the table below:

For each category the table below defines the risk control measures which are required. The measures are graded as either mandatory requirements or for guidance and consideration.

Category 1: - Clerk, Admin Assistant and Cleaners

Staff working in offices or other secure locations outside of normal working hours or who routinely work in these locations on their own. Work of a low risk office type nature.

Examples would include: Teachers, Office based staff, travelling to meetings at known locations.

MANDATORY:-

a. **For out of hours alarm calls each team must have clear instructions for staff an example procedure is attached at …….**

b. **Staff who are expected to respond to alarm call-outs must have access to a personally issued work mobile with appropriate reception or have indicated that they are willing to use their personal mobile in such circumstances and that it has appropriate network coverage for the area in question.**

c. **Where dealing with violence and aggression training is not provided, the line manager should give clear guidelines to staff who are lone working to include:**
    i)   **What work can and cannot be done alone**
    ii)   **When to withdraw or stop work and seek advice from a supervisor**
    iii)   **Any communication and check-in procedures.**

d. **Where the problem relates to poor security allowing un-authorised access to work areas, the security of the building should be reviewed, if necessary with the other occupiers or landlord and appropriate measures introduced.**

e. **Staff who are working remotely or visiting clients should file an itinerary for their day in a location that is accessible to their colleagues and manager.**

Appendix A

Category 2: Town Operative

Staff working in locations where security is inadequate or where shared premises would allow non-authorised access to their work area. Staff working in unfamiliar locations but not meeting members of the public. Staff visiting established clients who have been assessed as presenting no risk to staff. Staff responding to intruder alarm calls for co'' property out of hours. Fire-fighters conducting home fire risk assessments or similar activities.

Examples would include: Grounds men / school caretakers, staff whose duties including responding to out of hours intruder alarm calls, Co'' staff working in shared offices with poor security arrangements, some home care staff, fire-fighters fitting smoke detectors in residents properties by appointment.

MANDATORY

e. **For out of hours alarm calls each team must have clear instructions for staff an example procedure is attached at …….**

f. **Staff who are expected to respond to alarm call-outs must have access to a personally issued work mobile with appropriate reception or have indicated that they are willing to use their personal mobile in such circumstances and that it has appropriate network coverage for the area in question.**

g. **Where dealing with violence and aggression training is not provided, the line manager should give clear guidelines to staff who are lone working to include:**
   i) **What work can and cannot be done alone**
   ii) **When to withdraw or stop work and seek advice from a supervisor**
   iii) **Any communication and check-in procedures.**

h. **Where the problem relates to poor security allowing un-authorised access to work areas, the security of the building should be reviewed, if necessary with the other occupiers or landlord and appropriate measures introduced.**

i. **Staff who are working remotely or visiting clients should file an itinerary for their day in a location that is accessible to their colleagues and manager.**

Category 3:

Staff who visit unknown clients or clients who are known to present challenging or aggressive behaviour in their own homes in order to provide a service. Staff who routinely work in remote locations.

Appendix A

<u>MANDATORY</u>

a. **Staff dealing with clients must receive training on dealing with confrontational situations such as the Suzy Lamplugh trust's dealing with violence and aggression 1 day course. This training should be repeated annually.**

b. **A form of staff tracking system must be introduced and its use enforced. This could either be a buddy system or an automated system.   Your health and safety adviser will be able to advice on which system would be most suitable.**

c. **Staff must be briefed on the procedures for lone working before they start such work for the first time and at least 6 monthly thereafter. Records of these briefings should be maintained.**

Where a client presents a known risk of violence, then the visit should be re-arranged for a venue where appropriate levels of security or assistance are available. If there are particular reasons for the visit to take place at the client's home then at least 2 people should attend.

Risk Assessment - Lone working

Please refer to the document 'Lone Working - Guidance for Managers' when completing this risk assessment.

Name of section:	Date of assessment:

Lone working tasks/activities (List below)	Foreseeable hazards involved (E.g. violence, falls from height, manual handling injuries, etc.)	With all necessary controls in place, can a lone worker carry out the tasks/activities safely?	
		Yes	**No**

Are all people carrying out lone working tasks medically fit to work alone?   Yes ☐   No ☐

If no, discuss this with the individuals concerned and record separately (to maintain confidentiality) any adjustments to their work that are necessary.

Additional controls that will be put in place for tasks/activities that are unsafe to be carried out by a lone worker (E.g. working in pairs)

Control measures

Control factors	Actions/controls in place	Further actions/controls required
What specific or additional information or training do lone workers receive? (Provision of a written lone working procedure as a minimum.)		
What tasks are prohibited during lone working? (E.g. work at height, home visits to people with known history of violence, etc.)		
What arrangements are in place for supervising lone workers? (E.g. periodically accompanying lone workers.)		
What arrangements are in place for new members of staff who will be lone working? (As a minimum cover the lone working procedure at induction.)		
What arrangements are in place for tracking lone workers? (E.g. periodic visits to lone worker, calling in to base by the lone worker.)		

Foreseeable emergencies during lone working (Refer back to lone working activities listed earlier. E.g. lone worker fails to return from site, lone worker is attacked, etc.)	Action to be taken/emergency procedure		

Other lone working issues
Please use the space provided below to list any other lone working issues and control measures not covered above.

Lone working issue	Further actions/controls		
Name of assessor:		**Signature:**	**Date:**
Manager must sign below to accept the assessment and ensure that remedial actions are implemented.			
Managers name:		**Signature:**	**Date:**