

Lone Worker Policy

1. Remote/Lone Working Policy

1.11 In line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, this policy has been adopted to provide employees with guidance on remote/lone working and the potential problems it can cause. It sets out specific procedures which must be followed when working alone and staff are reminded that under health and safety law:

- a) A statutory duty is placed on all employees to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst at work.
- b) Employees are required to co-operate with their employer on matters of health and safety.

1.2 Employees can be at risk when working alone in the following circumstances:

- a) They find themselves in a remote, unoccupied location or they have an accident or mishap out of office hours. They are then unable to summon assistance as no one is aware of their whereabouts or their expected return time. The alarm would not be raised as the mechanism would not be in place to trigger this.
- b) They attempt to deal with a difficult situation with a member of the public or service user in an isolated area; the member of the public could then abuse them.
- c) They attempt to deal with a difficult situation with a member of the public or service user in an isolated area and then have allegations made regarding their conduct.

1.3 Each area of the Council's activities presents different risks. A detailed risk assessment will be undertaken and associated remote/lone worker procedure followed covering relevant areas. It should not be possible for staff to place themselves in high-risk situations without a procedure in place which guarantees that the member of staff can work safely at all times.

1.4 Remote/Lone Worker Risk Assessment

- a) Ensure members of staff have left a list of contact numbers of relatives, in case the office need to telephone someone about the whereabouts of a member of remote/lone working staff (most likely during out of hours)?
- b) Does the workplace or job duty present a specific risk to the remote/lone worker?
- c) Is there a risk of violence?
- d) Has training for vulnerable staff been considered?
- e) Are there hazards related to travelling alone?
- f) Are there health and safety implications in lifting or using equipment alone?
- g) Are there any particular types of people more at risk?
- h) Has the employee got a medical condition that may make them unsuitable to work alone?
- i) Have members of staff considered the possibility of inclement weather and the suitability of footwear and clothing?
- j) Is the use of mobile telephones/pagers/personal attack alarms necessary?
- k) Have staff been advised to be alert at all times and be aware of changes in their surroundings and the need to take extra care with people that they do not know?
- l) Is the vehicle used suitable/road worthy?
- m) Has the member of staff ensured that they park in a suitable location (this should be well lit during the hours of darkness)?

2. Risk Assessment for Remote/Lone Working

2.1 Before any remote/lone working takes place it is essential that a formal detailed risk assessment is undertaken. This should cover any foreseeable hazards that may be encountered. Clearly, there will be a range of risk levels that staff will encounter, and these can be categorised as low, medium or high and will therefore require different levels of precautionary action.

- a) Low risk is when work consists of normal travel and involves contact with other colleagues within normal working time. This will not involve work in remote areas, or places with which contact may be difficult or where the need to maintain contact with the office will be minimal. Consideration must be taken of the potential for the situation to change and the possibility of a task becoming a medium or high-risk activity.
- b) Medium risk is work that could entail working alone, in locations where contact may be limited or perhaps staff would be involved in an activity which would not normally be classed as low risk.
- c) High risk activities will involve one or more of the following:
 - i. Remote areas/difficult terrain.
 - ii. Work outside of 'standard' working hours.
 - iii. Areas of poor communication for mobile phones or lack of public telephones in rural areas.
 - iv. Areas where problems have previously been encountered, such as violence or vandalism.
 - v. Initial meeting with a new client or member of public.
 - vi. Potentially hostile/sensitive situations.

2.2 If members of staff are unsure as to the level of risk, they should discuss it with colleagues and/or the Town Clerk or treat it as high risk.

2.3 High risk activities should not be undertaken when working alone

3. Making Arrangements for Remote/Lone Working

3.1 The staff member on front desk duty is the nominated contact at the Council offices for the remote/lone worker during office hours.

3.2 The remote/lone worker should provide the following details to the Council offices:

- a) Vehicle details and registration number (if not a Council vehicle)
- b) Home telephone number
- c) Alternative contact telephone number if there is no contact at the home address (next of kin)
- d) Mobile telephone number
- e) Place of work, or and name, address and contact details, if staff member is working in a non-Council controlled premises
- f) Call office with a time of arrival at site
- g) Estimated length of time for job

3.3 Arrangements should be in place to ensure that these contact details are always kept up to date.

- 3.4 The employee should contact the Council Office when leaving appointment/site
- 3.5 During working hours, employees are expected to carry mobile phones at all times and if something out of the ordinary is required, they should contact the Maintenance Manager/Council offices immediately.
- 3.6 The procedure for the remote/lone worker during out of office hours should include the following:
- a) Ensure the employee's Council mobile phone is switched on with volume up, charged up and has sufficient credit. If the employee has been issued with a personal alarm, ensure it is with the employee.
 - b) Ensure there is sufficient signal on the site the employee will be visiting or there is an alternative telephone option and provide details. If the mobile phone is out of signal, it may be necessary to abandon the activity or visit.
 - c) General checks when working away from the office
 - i. Is this a doubling up situation?
 - ii. Does the employee feel safe doing this task?
 - iii. Does someone know the details of this visit?
 - iv. Have emergency contacts and arrangements been set up?
 - v. Is the journey planned: roads to take, whereabouts of destination and carparks?
 - d) Travelling by car
 - i. Is the mobile phone handy and switched on?
 - ii. Lock doors when inside if possible
 - e) Parking
 - i. Park in well-lit areas if possible
 - ii. Park with the car facing the direction to leave
 - iii. Carry keys before getting near the car
 - f) Travelling on public transport
 - i. Plan in advance, get full timetables
 - ii. Keep alternative in hand, e.g., taxi numbers
 - iii. Do not get into a space where you are the only person

4. Recording Incidents

- 4.1 An untoward incident is one where an employee feels threatened or finds themselves in a vulnerable position.
- 4.2 If an incident occurs:
- a) Use your common sense
 - b) Ensure your safety and that of others
 - c) Defuse the situation if you are able
 - d) Get immediate help if possible
 - e) Use your safety equipment; do not be afraid to call the police

- 4.3 When locking/unlocking Council premises out of business hours, if faced with a threat, DO NOT put yourself at risk. Either leave the premises and dial 999 immediately or lock yourself in to the premises and dial 999 immediately, whichever is the safest.
- 4.4 On next reporting to duty, any incidents must be reported immediately to the Maintenance Manager or the Town Clerk.
- 4.5 If an incident does not warrant a 999 call, then the lone worker should contact the Police on 101 or another member of the team. Under no circumstances should the lone worker put themselves at risk either regarding personal safety or liability (e.g., physical contact with minors).

5. Communication

All employees who regularly work alone, such as the maintenance team, will use their own personal mobile phones to liaise with the Office and to call for emergency assistance. Expenses are reimbursed for any Council-related phone calls during work time.

6. Mobile Phones

Mobile phones should always be kept fully charged, turned on with volume up and have sufficient credit.

- a) The employee should ensure that they know how to use the mobile phone properly through familiarising themselves with the instruction manual.
- b) A mobile phone should never be relied upon as the only means of communication. Remote/lone workers should always check the signal strength before entering a situation where they are alone. If the lone worker finds there is no mobile phone signal and is not comfortable proceeding with their task, they should inform the Line Manager as soon as possible.
- c) Emergency contacts should be kept on speed dial as this will speed up the process of making a call to raise an alarm.
- d) A phone should never be left unattended but should be kept close at hand in case an emergency arises.
- e) The use of a mobile phone could potentially escalate an aggressive situation and the remote/lone worker should use it in a sensitive and sensible manner.
- f) The mobile phone could also be a target for thieves and great care should be taken to be as discreet as possible, whilst remaining aware of risks and keeping it within reach at all times

7. Reporting

- 7.1 Members of staff have a duty to report any injuries or dangerous occurrences as soon as practicable.
- 7.2 The Council has a responsibility to take action to prevent similar incidents occurring again, if possible. This may mean making employees aware of potential incidents and providing information and training. Part of this training should include agreeing limits to what can and cannot be done in a "lone" worker situation.