

# **LONE WORKING SAFETY GUIDANCE**

**Understanding the risks and hazards associated with lone working and the arrangements necessary to ensure employees are sufficiently protected while lone working**

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## Introduction

In Warwickshire County Council lone working is defined as 'Someone whose activities involve a large percentage of their time working in situations without the benefit of direct interaction and supervision with other colleagues.'

### **Lone working can include:**

- A person working alone from a fixed base (i.e., local office, library etc),
- Working away from a fixed base (i.e., community support workers, social workers, enforcement officers etc),
- Home workers (as part of their working conditions),
- Working from home (flexible / agile/ hybrid working etc)
- Making home or site visits (day and night)
- Working outside normal office hours (caretakers, security etc)
- Mobile workers (drivers, travelling officers etc).

Lone workers can also be working in teams within the same vicinity or building, but they are located far enough away from their colleagues that they are out of sight and out of hearing range, whether that's at a fixed location, on the road, or somewhere else.

(There may be times when employees are involved in more than one category of risk)

Although in most cases, working alone is relatively low risk there are some colleagues in the Council that are at higher risk and therefore each individual case of lone working should be risk assessed.

## Scope

This guidance will provide practical advice and instruction on how to safely work alone, including the assessment of lone worker risks, and examples of the control measures that must be implemented to ensure lone working remains healthy and safe.

### **This guidance applies to the following.**

*To all Warwickshire County Council employees, agency workers, contractors, consultants, volunteers, visitors and any other persons who may carry out duties on behalf of Warwickshire County Council.*

## Legislation

The following Government Legislations and Guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are relevant to managing lone working.

### **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**

All employers have a duty to maintain a safe working environment 'so far as reasonably practicable' for their employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This means the Council is expected to protect its employees against risks to their health and safety. The Act also expects that the working environment is safe and that training to ensure the health and safety of workers is carried out. These requirements apply not only to the Council's office-based employees but to the Council's lone workers and the environments they encounter too.

### **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

The regulations make it clear what employers must do under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the main requirement of which is to assess all the risks to the health and safety of their employees and, to record the outcomes of the assessment.

The regulations also expect employees to take reasonable care for their own personal

safety.

There are several other pieces of legislation which might need to be considered for lone workers in particular situations.

- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999 (COSHH)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)
- Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007

### **Protecting Lone Workers - How to manage the risks of working alone 03/20 INDG73 (rev4)**

This guidance explains how to keep lone workers healthy and safe. It is for anyone who employs lone workers, or engages them as contractors etc, including self-employed people or those who work alone.

## **Guidance on How to Classify the Risk Level of each Lone Workers**

We have defined Low, Medium, High and Very High risk ratings and 3 different levels of lone workers in WCC, as identified in table 1 below. Each level of risk must have a lone working risk assessment completed before any lone working can be completed. In certain cases of lone working a specific personal risk assessment may be needed for employees who may have increased risk while lone working e.g., medical suitability, pregnancy etc.

**Table 1.** List (non-exhaustive) of groups / occupations where lone workers may exist. (Some occupations may appear in multiple risk ratings)

	<b>LONE WORKER GROUP</b>	<b>RISK RATING</b>	<b>EXAMPLE OCCUPATIONS</b>
<b>Level 3</b>	Employees working outside normal work hours in offices or home environment	<b>LOW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Home / Agile / Hybrid working Employees</li><li>• Health / Social Care Employees</li><li>• Nursing and Medical Employees</li></ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	Employees working in remote parts of premises without the benefit of interaction with other colleagues or supervision	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilities and Maintenance Employees</li><li>• Auditing / Inspection Employees</li><li>• Caretaking Employees</li><li>• ICT Maintenance Employees</li><li>• Head Teachers</li></ul>
<b>Level 1</b>	Mobile employees working away from their fixed base or who travel in the course of their work to remote locations	<b>HIGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilities and Maintenance Employees</li><li>• County Highways Employees</li><li>• Auditing / Inspection Employees</li><li>• Health / Social Care Employees</li></ul>

<b>Level 1</b>	Employees working with the public in remote locations, outside normal day shift working hours, carrying out home visits, security or safeguarding visits, emergency works or call outs	<b>VERY HIGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care Workers</li> <li>• Social Care Employees</li> <li>• On-call Emergency Support Employees</li> <li>• Caretaking Employees</li> <li>• Security Employees</li> <li>• Transport Employees</li> <li>• Nursing and Medical Employees</li> <li>• Community Support Employees</li> </ul>
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## Roles and Responsibilities

### Employer Responsibilities

Health & Safety legislation places specific duties on the employer to ensure lone working is managed suitably and sufficiently so lone workers are not exposed to greater risks than employees who work together.

#### Warwickshire County Council as the Employer must:

- Ensure risk assessments are completed to identify the risks associated with working alone and unsupervised work to ensure sufficient measures are being implemented to control risks to employee health and safety, such as accidental injury or physical assault.
- Ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all employees and others who carry out duties on behalf of Warwickshire County Council.
- Ensure leadership teams regularly evaluate and review control measures to ensure they remain suitable and sufficient to control the risks to employees.

### Manager Responsibilities

To support the Council's employer duties all managers (including Headteachers) must undertake risk assessments for all employees identified as lone workers. This must involve identifying lone working hazards, assessing the risks and implementing adequate control measures to eliminate or reduce the risks, so lone workers are not exposed to greater risks than employees who work together.

#### Managers must:

- Identify all employees where lone working is part of the employees working practice.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed before allowing lone working– this responsibility cannot be transferred to the lone worker. Risk assessments will help identify potential issues to be addressed and confirm whether the work can be carried out safely by one unaccompanied person. **(See Appendix 1 – Lone Working Risk Assessment Guidance and Checklist)**
- Identify all hazards and risks, including violence, manual handling, the medical suitability of the employee to work alone and whether the workplace itself presents a risk to them.

- Ensure lone workers are sufficiently trained to understand the risks and precautions associated with the role and know when to ask for support or advice.
- Regularly test control measures and all emergency procedures to ensure lone workers can be reached or contacted if a problem or emergency is identified.
- Ensure that lone working risk assessments are reviewed annually or more frequently where there has been any significant change or incidents, and if new legislation requires change to best working practice.
- Report any lone working related incidents immediately to the Health & Safety Team via the Accident Reporting System.

### **Monitoring and Communicating with Lone Workers**

Managers must have clear procedures in place for effective communication and monitoring of lone workers both night and day.

#### **These must include:**

- Ensuring emergency procedures are in place, understood and employees are trained in them, including robust systems to ensure all lone worker whereabouts can be tracked and monitored in an emergency both night and day.
- Ensuring arrangements are in place to record when lone workers have returned to their base or home once their work is completed.
- Ensuring emergency arrangements are regularly tested, and everyone understands their responsibilities in an emergency.
- Ensuring control measures include pre-agreed intervals of regular check-ins between the lone workers and their managers.
- Ensuring any devices designed to raise the alarm in an emergency can be operated manually or automatically.
- Ensuring managers periodically visit and observe employees who work alone.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

Employees also have a responsibility under health and safety legislation to take reasonable care of their own and other people's safety.

#### **In terms of lone working all employees must:**

- Ensure they follow any localised arrangements, policies and specific guidance for lone working, including monitoring arrangements.
- Have an awareness of their surroundings and the possible threats to their personal safety when working alone
- Ensure that their lone working activities do not put themselves or others at risk.
- Ensure they are involved in assessing risk and identifying safety measures for lone working.
- Leave the working environment if there is an imminent danger to their safety.
- Ensure they complete and follow training provided to ensure their safety.
- Use equipment in accordance with the training given and not misuse it
- Tell their manager when they feel safety measures are not adequate.
- Tell their manager when they have encountered a 'near miss' or have identified additional risks to their safety that were previously unidentified.
- Report immediately to their line manager, any adverse incidents that have arisen as a result of lone working.

## Information, Instruction and Training

Appropriate information and training is an essential component in enabling employees to carry out lone working activities. Managers must ensure the appropriate training needed for lone workers is identified and delivered as part of the risk assessment. Training must be available to employees who are required to communicate with the public or service users in lone working situations.

## Implementation

Management guidance will be provided and updated to support the implementation of this guidance.

## Compliance

This guidance will enable Warwickshire County Council to conform to statutory requirements and best current practice.

## Review of Arrangement

This guidance will be reviewed by the Health & Safety Team every three years or more frequently where there has been any significant change or incidents, and if new legislation requires change to best working practice.

## Further Information and References

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- The Health & Safety (Consultation with employees) Regulations 1996
- Protecting lone workers - How to manage the risks of working alone INDG73 - 03/20 (rev4)
- HSE INDG69 Violence at Work – A guide for employers.
- HSE INDG163 'Risk assessment- A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace'

## Appendix 1

### Lone Working Risk Assessment Guidance

The process of conducting a risk assessment for lone working is no different to that followed when assessing any other activity. The risk assessment must be signed and dated, kept up-to-date and reviewed at least annually or in line with local procedures. If developments suggest that the current risk assessment is no longer valid, or that it can be improved, the assessment must be amended.

Reviews should take place after an incident as soon as is reasonably practicable or within 10 working days, to see whether there is a need to change working procedures, implement new working practices, make changes to the working environment or provide additional training.

Generic assessments may be created for guidance on repeated tasks rather than develop a new risk assessment for every task for every person. These generics must then be tailored to different environments, individuals, risks and hazards in order to make them specific to the individual and task.

**The important point is to carry out the assessment systematically, considering the following:**

- Identify the hazards associated with the work that is carried out unaccompanied and the environment.
- Assess the risks associated with the work, prior to employees working alone, ensuring they are involved in the process and decide on the safe working measures and arrangements to control the risk, including the physical controls, training, supervision and monitoring and contact arrangements.
- The limits on what employees can and cannot do whilst working alone.
- The risk assessment must be signed and dated, kept up-to-date and reviewed at least annually. If developments suggest that the lone working arrangements are no longer viable, the assessment must be amended. Reviews should take place after an incident to see whether there is a need to change working procedures, implement new working practices.
- Implement safe working procedures and arrangements.
- Ensure that the information is shared with all relevant parties.
- Employees must report any accidents/incidents or near misses which could affect their safety. This will allow for a proper review of the adequacy of the working arrangements.

**Risk assessments must consider the following factors:**

- The length of time the person may be working alone.
- The time of day or night when a person may work alone.
- Methods of communication and tracing to ensure that employees can be found in an emergency.
- The location and type of workplace and if travel is involved.
- The nature of the work, also considering the equipment to be used and whether it can be carried safely by one person.
- The risk of violence to employees, verbal and physical.
- Whether particular groups of employees e.g., new and inexperienced employees, pregnant employees, young employees and trainees may be at more risk.
- The knowledge of a medical condition of the lone worker, which may increase the



risks of working alone, further Occupational Health advice may be needed.

- Ensure employees know who to contact and what action to take in an emergency.
- Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies such as a fire, equipment failure, illness or accident / incident.
- Controlling the risks associated with lone working will also include the relevant training, information, instruction, supervision and possible protective equipment etc.

**Local procedures for monitoring lone workers to ensure that they remain safe may include:**

- Regular contact between the lone worker and manager or “buddy” and supervision using communication systems designed to assist with employee’s safety.
- Automatic warning devices, which operate if specific signals or codes are not received periodically from the lone worker e.g., manual or automatic personal alarms
- Ensuring that the lone worker has returned to base or home on completion of the task

## Lone Worker Hazard Checklist

The generic checklist below may be used to help managers define the hazards when lone working takes place and to undertake a lone working risk assessment.

Name of employee or work team:	
Managers name:	
Date checklist completed:	

General	Yes/No	N/A
Do employees work alone?		
Do employees work outside normal office hours?		
Do employees meet with clients or service users in isolated locations/on the street?		
Have mobile phones been issued to employees?		
Have employees been issued with personal attack alarms?		
Do employees have any other personal alarm or protection devices?		
The Employee	Yes/No	N/A
Are there any factors why an individual employee may be more at risk when working alone such as: gender, age, disability, race, new or expectant employees, inexperience etc.		
Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone (some medical conditions may make lone working more hazardous for the employee)?		
Has the worker got sufficient information about the job, equipment, or substances?		
Are employees trained in safe working practices?		
Has the employee demonstrated their ability to do the task satisfactorily?		
Are employees aware of the emergency procedures in place?		
The general workplace	Yes/No	N/A
Is the employee a key-holder to the premises or school?		
Is the access to, or exit from, the workplace safe?		
Is the lighting around the premises adequate?		
Do you use entrance security systems (i.e. digital locks or swipe cards)?		

Does the workplace allow access to members of the public/service users?		
Is there a risk of violence from members of the public / trespasses or unlawful behavior?		
Knowledge of job/location or service user	Yes/No	N/A
Has the employee got sufficient background information on the client/service user?		
Do you include potential or known risk factors in referral documents and care plans?		
Do you share risk information with other Warwickshire County Council teams, professional(s) bodies and agencies?		
Have you a method in place to define whether additional employees (or other agencies such as the Police) need to be present?		
When employees travel to a new location or meeting place are they provided with sufficient information about the location and site access e.g. parking?		
Meetings and Home Visits	Yes/No	N/A
Can meetings take place in the primary office / interview rooms rather than at a person's home?		
Are interview rooms designed and set up appropriately?		
If interviews take place in a service user's home has a plan been made of who must be present and why?		
Have employees been fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence?		
Do employees carry out visits in high-risk locations (i.e. areas with high crime rates)?		
Do employees carry out visits in isolated rural areas?		
Do employees visit unfamiliar clients or service users?		
Do employees visit a high-risk or unstable or unpredictable client group?		
Do employees carry out visits or security services during unsocial hours?		
The type of work	Yes/No	N/A
Will any part of the work present a physical risk?		
Is equipment safe and regularly maintained?		
Do employee activities involve working in confined spaces?		
Do employee activities involve handling dangerous substances?		
What risks will the worker be exposed to in the event of equipment failure?		
Can substances and goods be handled safely/can they be handled by one person?		
Where lifting/manual handling takes place – can the lone worker carry this out in a safe manner?		
Is the worker required to work at height (use ladders, step ladders etc.)		
Do the workers have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and are they trained in its use?		
Are cash/valuables or medical drugs being carried?		
Is first aid provision required?		
Intruders	Yes/No	N/A
Are procedures in place for dealing with intruders in Warwickshire County Council premises?		
Are all employees aware of these procedures?		
Emergency Callouts	Yes/No	N/A
When a call out system is in place are there guidelines to follow in terms of who can attend?		
Have arrangements been made for different times of day/night on who can attend?		
Are employees aware of these guidelines?		

<b>Travel and Transport</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Have you considered how employees will travel to and from appointments?		
Are travel arrangements considered as part of the work plan?		
Do employees provide an itinerary when they are working away from the office base?		
Do employees have a defined means of contacting managers & colleagues if necessary?		
Do you use reporting checking-in systems?		
Do you use mobile phones or other communication systems?		
When valuables are carried in a vehicle are employees aware of the procedures to follow in the storage of these items?		
<b>Supervision</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Do you carry out regular supervisor or colleague checks during work activities?		
Are less experienced and new team members subject to greater supervision as necessary?		
<b>Information and Training</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Do employees have information and training on basic personal safety?		
Are employees trained in strategies for preventing and managing violence?		
Are employees aware of the lone working procedures for their team and/or workplace?		
<b>Reporting systems</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Are employees aware of the reporting procedures and systems in place (e.g. Violence and Accident Reporting)?		
Do employees have access to the Councils reporting system for incidents or near misses?		
<b>Other Hazards – Please list as necessary</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>N/A</b>

### INFORMATION IN OTHER FORMATS

If this information is difficult to understand, we can provide it in another format, for example, large print, audio tape, easy read, or in another language.

Please contact the Interpreting and Translation Unit on 01926 410410