Warwickshire County Council

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

Contents

Introduction

In Warwickshire County Council lone working is defined as 'Someone whose activities involve a significant 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),
- Making home or site visits (day and night)
- Working outside normal office hours (caretakers, security etc)
- Mobile workers (drivers, travelling officers etc).
- Home workers (as part of their working conditions),
- Working from home (flexible / agile/ hybrid working 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 is 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 employees that are at higher risk and therefore each activity involving lone working should be risk assessed correctly.

Scope

This document will supply guidance to both employees and managers on how to complete risk assessments for lone working and to ensure sufficient measures are implemented to control risks to employee health and safety.

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 must 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.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
The regulations state employer's duties 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 those assessments.
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 some 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 employ's lone workers, or engages them as contractor's 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 distinct levels of lone workers in Warwickshire County Council, as found in table 1 below. Each level of risk must have a 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)

	LONE WORKER GROUP	RISK RATING	EXAMPLE OCCUPATIONS
Level 3	Employees working outside normal work hours in offices or home environment	**LOW**	- Home / Agile / Hybrid working Employees - Health / Social Care Employees - Nursing and Medical Employees
Level 2	Employees working in remote parts of premises without the benefit of interaction with other colleagues or supervision	**MEDIUM**	- Facilities and Maintenance Employees - Auditing / Inspection Employees - Caretaking Employees - ICT Maintenance Employees - Head Teachers
Level 1	Mobile employees working away from their fixed base or who travel in the course of their work to remote locations	**HIGH**	- Facilities and Maintenance Employees - County Highways Employees - Auditing / Inspection Employees - Health / Social Care Employees
Level 1	Employees working with the public in remote locations, outside normal day	**VERY**	- Health Care Workers - Social Care Employees

	shift working hours, carrying out home visits, security or safeguarding visits, emergency works or call outs	**HIGH**	• On-call Emergency Support Employees • Caretaking Employees • Security Employees • Transport Employees • Nursing and Medical Employees • Community Support Employees

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 ensure sufficient measures are being implemented to control risks to employee health and safety, such as accidental injury, physical assault, and mental health.
- Ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, 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 still are 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 working. 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 team generic risk assessments are completed and where necessary individual risk assessments are also completed before lone working. Risk assessments will help identify potential hazards to be addressed and confirm whether the work activity can be carried out safely. The process of conducting a risk assessment for lone working is no different to that followed when assessing any other work activity. Guidance on completing Risk Assessments can be found **here.**
- Ensure individuals who have indicated they are not feeling well, and their wellbeing might be affected by working alone have access to the Councils wellness plans and employee assistance programmes for support. Guidance on completing wellness plans can be found **here.**
- Ensure lone workers are sufficiently trained to understand the risks and precautions associated with the activity 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 risk assessments are reviewed annually or more frequently where there has been any notable change or incidents, and if new legislation requires change to best working practice.
- Report any lone working related incidents at once 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, based on lone working risk assessments.

These must include:

- Ensuring emergency procedures are in place, understood and employees are trained in them, including robust systems to ensure 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 used 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 line manager if they feel isolated, stressed or their mental health is being affected because of working alone.
- Tell their manager when they have encountered a 'near miss' or have identified additional risks to their safety that were previously unidentified.
- Report at once to their line manager, any adverse incidents that have arisen because of lone working.

Information, Instruction and Training

Appropriate information and training are an essential part 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.

Implementation

Management guidance on risk assessments 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 current best 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 notable 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'

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