

# LONE WORKING SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

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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# 1. Introduction

1.1 In Warwickshire County Council lone working is defined as those who work by themselves without the benefit of direct interaction and close supervision.

## Lone working can include:

- A person working alone from a fixed base (i.e., local office, library, home 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).

1.2 Lone workers may be working in teams within the same vicinity or building but may be out of sight and / or out of hearing range, whether that is at a fixed location, on the road, or somewhere else.

1.3 Although in most cases, working alone is relatively low risk there are some employees that may be at higher risk and therefore each work activity that includes lone working should be risk assessed correctly. (There may be times when employees are involved in more than one category of risk).

1.4 Within this guidance, it is explained what safety systems and arrangements managers must have in place to control the hazards of lone working based on the level of risk assessed.

## 2. Scope

2.1 This guidance enables Warwickshire County Council to adhere to the statutory requirements and current best practices for working alone.

## 3. Legislation Requirements

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

- **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 may work alone.

- **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.

- **In some specific working environments other legislation should be considered for lone working guidance**
  - 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

## 4. How to Classify the Risk Levels for Lone Working Groups

- 4.1 The Council has defined Low, Medium, High, and Very High-risk ratings and 3 distinct levels of lone workers, which are shown in Table 1 below. As for any work related activity, a risk assessment must be completed before any lone working is undertaken.
- 4.2 In certain cases of high and very high risk lone working a more detailed personal specific risk assessment may be needed for employees who are at increased risk e.g., medical suitability, pregnancy etc. Guidance on how to complete all risk assessments can be found [here](#).

**Table 1.** List (non-exhaustive) of groups / occupations where lone working 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	<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>
Level 2	Employees working in remote parts of premises without the benefit of interaction with other colleagues or supervision	MEDIUM	<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>
Level 1	Mobile employees working away from their fixed base or who travel in the course of their work to remote locations	HIGH	<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>
Level 1	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	VERY HIGH	<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> </ul>

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Council's Health & Safety policy provides full details of the roles and responsibilities relating to Health and Safety management.
- 5.2 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 other employees. In terms of the regulations 'employees' include, agency workers, contractors, consultants, volunteers, visitors, and any other persons who may carry out duties on behalf of Warwickshire County Council involving lone working.
- 5.3 Directorate leadership teams must ensure that the general activity of lone working is risk assessed and sufficient control measures are being implemented to control risks to health and safety, for example, accidental injury, physical assault, and mental health. This includes any personal specific risk assessments necessary for employees identified at greater risk while lone working. All risk assessments must be regularly evaluated and reviewed to ensure they remain suitable and sufficient to control the risks and hazards identified. Guidance on completing risk assessments can be found [here](#).

## 6. Manager Responsibilities

- 6.1 To meet the Council's legal duties as the employer, it is the responsibility of all managers (including headteachers) to complete risk assessments for all activities undertaken on behalf of WCC. The process for completing a risk assessment for lone working is no different to that for any other work activity and should identify all potential hazards and record the control measures implemented so the work activity can be carried out safely.

### Managers must:

- Identify all activities in their area of responsibility where employees and those working on behalf of WCC, undertake lone working as part of their working practices.
- Ensure activity risk assessments, and where required, any specific personal risk assessments are completed before any lone working is undertaken. Guidance on completing risk assessments can be found [here](#).
- As defined by the Council's risk assessment guidance, risk assessments must be reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently if required, for example where changes to legal regulations are published.
- Where required, complete a wellness plan for individuals who are lone working to address issues relating to stress, mental health and their working environment. Guidance on completing wellness plans found [here](#).
- Ensure employees know how to seek support and access the Council's Employee Assistance Programme [here](#).
- Have clear arrangements in place to:
  - Effectively communicate with and verify the current location of lone workers.

- Know when a lone worker has returned to their base or home once work is completed.
  - Make contact with lone workers in the case of an emergency.
  - Visit and observe lone workers periodically in the course of their work.
  - Regularly test control measures and emergency arrangements for effectiveness.
- 6.2 The testing of control measures and emergency arrangements must be completed at least annually, or more frequently in cases of high and very high risk lone working.
- 6.3 Where technology is being used to identify locations and raise help or assistance in an emergency, managers must ensure that lone workers are trained in the use of such technology.
- 6.4 Ensure lone workers understand the risks and hazards associated with lone working and any support mechanisms which are in place. Managers should also ensure that lone workers know how and when to ask for support, guidance or advice.

## 7. Employee Responsibilities

- 7.1 Employees also have a responsibility under Health and Safety Legislation to take reasonable care of their own and other people's safety.

### 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 control 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, anxious 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.
- Report any lone working related incidents at once to the Health & Safety Team using the Accident Reporting System found [here](#)

## 8. Information, Instruction and Training

- 8.1 Appropriate information, instruction and training are an essential part of enabling employees to carry out lone working activities. Managers must ensure that appropriate and relevant training, such as personal safety training is identified as part of the control measures in the risk assessment and delivered where required. Training currently available can be found [here](#).

## 9. Review of Guidance

- 9.1 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.

### 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.

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