



Lone Working Policy and Guidance

Introduction

1. Some jobs within the Council require employees to work alone and away from their colleagues. This may mean they could be exposed to higher risks from their work, equipment or surroundings.
2. This policy and guidance will help managers to:
 - identify work activities which include lone working
 - assess the risks to individual employees
 - devise measures to reduce these risks, so far as is reasonably practicable
 - draw up and implement local procedures and guidelines
 - monitor and improve the effectiveness of precautions for lone workers.

Definitions

3. Lone workers are people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) classifies lone workers under two headings:
 - people in fixed establishments, and
 - mobile workers away from their fixed base.

Examples for each category within the Council are given below...

Fixed establishments

- Employees working in small workshops, such as technicians.
- Out-of-hours workers, such as cleaners and caretakers.
- Employees in isolated establishments, such as small sports facilities and libraries.

Mobile workers

- Home care employees.
- Visiting officers.
- Enforcement officers.
- Surveyors and inspectors.
- Couriers.



Legal requirements

4. Generally, the law doesn't ban lone working, except for specific tasks or groups of employees. The restrictions apply where the hazards are considered too great for people to work alone, such as some high-risk situations:
 - in confined spaces
 - during live electrical work.
5. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires the Council to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees, so far as is reasonably practicable. This includes minimising the risks of lone working.
6. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 extend this general duty. They require the Council to:
 - assess the risks employees may be exposed to at work, including lone working, and
 - identify and implement measures that should be taken to remove or reduce them.
7. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013, RIDDOR, require the Council to notify the HSE of all reportable accidents, including those to lone workers. This applies regardless of where the accident took place. There is further information in the Council's Accidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Reporting Policy and Guidance.
8. The Health and Safety Team (HST) will be able to give you further specific information on the legal requirements affecting your lone workers.

Lone working risk assessment

9. You must carry out general risk assessments for all the work activities under your control. These will highlight where you need to carry out specific assessments, such as for lone working, manual handling and the use of hazardous substances. For lone working, follow these steps...
 - Review what tasks are carried out, how, where, when and by whom.
 - Identify from this when staff work alone.
 - Identify the hazards all staff may be exposed to, then decide whether lone workers are at more risk.
 - Evaluate existing control measures to make sure they meet current standards and work effectively.
 - Decide whether additional control measures are necessary and practical.
 - Decide whether the risks of a particular work activity are too great to be carried out by a lone worker.
 - Implement additional control measures, such as training employees to use new procedures and equipment.
 - Review and monitor the risk assessment on a regular basis.

10. You must involve your employees and their trade union safety representatives in the risk assessment process. They're a valuable source of information and advice about the daily realities and problems of their jobs. Involving them at an early stage will help to make sure you identify all relevant hazards and choose appropriate controls.
11. You also have a legal duty to consult employees on health and safety issues, keep them informed about the risks associated with their work and the measures put in place to protect them.
12. You must be able to prove that you have adequately considered the risks of lone working. To do this, you should record each stage of the assessment process using our Lone Worker Risk Assessment form. Complete one form for each work activity that involves lone working. You **don't** have to use this form, but any alternative you choose must cover the same points. Contact HST for further advice and approval of any alternative form you wish to use.

Identifying lone working

13. The first step in the risk assessment process is to review all work activities and identify employees who may be required to work alone. Remember to include these factors...
 - Employees working on emergency call-outs, such as key holders answering burglar alarm calls or on-call duty officers.
 - Work activities that include irregular or unusual tasks, such out-of-hours enforcement and inspection work.
 - Staff working in areas isolated from other employees or when colleagues are absent, such as home care staff and toilet attendants.
 - Working patterns that mean employees work alone for a proportion of their time, particularly if the task involves cash handling or dealing with members of the public.
14. It's important that you look at the jobs employees do, and **when and where** they do them. Are there instances where they are out of sight or contact with other colleagues, for example, when visiting a remote location?

Identifying hazards

15. Lone workers will be exposed to the same hazards as employees who work as part of a team. However, the likelihood of harm being caused by those hazards may be greater for a solitary individual. Here are a couple of examples...
 - The moving parts of machinery, such as the blades of mowing machines, have the potential to cause injury. This hazard is the same for both team and lone workers. However, the outcome of an accident may be more severe for a lone worker, because they may not be able to summon help in an emergency.
 - Some employees may be exposed to aggression and violence at work. While this is a hazard that affects both team and lone workers, a lone

employee may be more vulnerable. Anyone planning theft or violence is more likely to risk attacking a lone individual.

Assessing the risks from lone working

16. The purpose of this stage of the process is to establish:

- whether the work can be done safely by a lone worker, and
- what arrangements will make sure they're not exposed to greater risk than employees who work together.

These checklists will help you do this...

Can the job be carried out safely by one person?

- Does the job or environment present a special risk to the lone worker? For example, are they working in plant rooms, at height or in remote locations?
- Is there a safe way to and from the workplace? If access equipment is needed, can it be used safely by one person?
- Can all the equipment and materials needed for the work be safely handled and used by the lone worker?
- Are any manual handling operations involved in the task? Can a lone worker carry them out safely?
- Does the task involve cash handling, enforcement duties or giving unwelcome news? These activities may all act as triggers for violence or aggression.

Is the employee medically fit and capable of working alone?

- Check that lone workers have no medical conditions that may make it dangerous for them to work alone. You must carry out a separate risk assessment for any individual you identify in this category. Consider both normal tasks and foreseeable emergencies, which may place additional physical and mental burdens on them. Get medical advice from [Occupational Health](#).
- If a new employee will be required to work alone, make sure their pre-employment medical assessment considers this.
- If employees take on new tasks as part of job redesign or redeployment, check that they are fit enough to cope with any lone working.
- Night workers, as defined in the Working Time Regulations, are a special case and must be offered health assessments every 12 months. You can get advice about this from Human Resources (HR).

What training has the lone worker had?

- Have lone workers received sufficient training and information to work safely with limited supervision? If not, what additional training do they need?
- Are they sufficiently competent and experienced to deal with both the routine tasks and foreseeable emergencies?
- Do they fully understand and appreciate the risks involved and the necessity for the control measures?

How will lone workers be supervised?

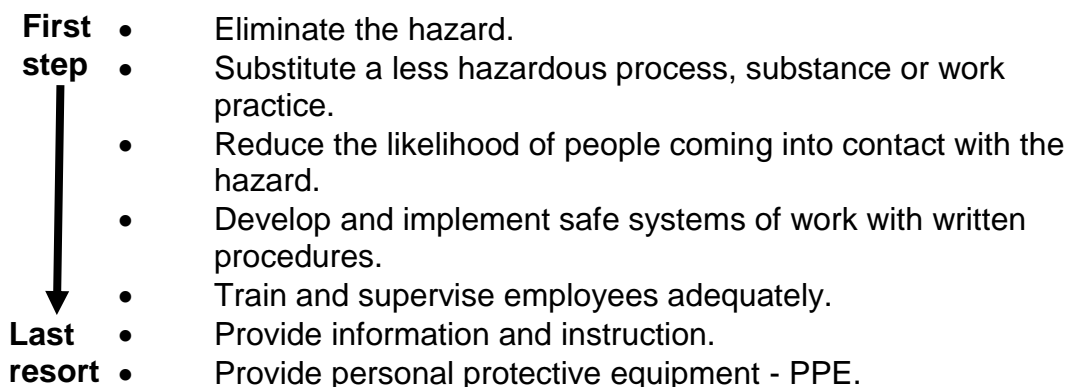
- Have suitable systems been devised and implemented to monitor the safety and well-being of lone workers? Do they include clear instructions on:
 - which activities lone workers must **not** carry out
 - when to stop work and seek advice from a manager
 - when direct supervision is required?
- How will you record supervisory visits and other contacts to prove you are actively monitoring them?

What emergency arrangements are in place?

- Have procedures been drawn up for all foreseeable emergencies, including sudden illness, accidents and aggressive incidents, fire or equipment failure?
- Have all lone workers been trained in emergency procedures?
- Are welfare facilities, including first aid, available to the lone worker?

Controlling the risks from lone working

17. Establishing safe working procedures for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees. If risk assessments show that tasks can't be carried out safely by a lone worker, then you must either:
 - put appropriate control measures in place, or if this isn't possible,
 - only allow high risk tasks to be carried out by teams of employees.
18. It's important that you know the law and standards that apply to the work activities you control. This will help you decide whether the requirements can be met by an employee working alone. If you're unsure, contact HST.
19. When considering risk control measures, you should always attempt to eliminate the hazard completely. However, it's not always possible to do this, so you should then follow this hierarchy of measures...



20. Here are some examples...
 - **Eliminate** the risk by withdrawing the service or an element of it. For example, stopping lone workers from collecting cash payments for a service if this would put them at increased risk of harm.

- **Substitute** a less hazardous substance or work practice. For example, double staffing for visits where enforcement action is necessary and there's a known history of violence, or replacing solvent-based cleaning products with water-based alternatives.
- **Reduce** the likelihood of employees coming into contact with the hazard. For example, improving physical security measures will help to reduce the risk of aggression and violence. This could include providing screens for counter staff or door entry control systems to prevent casual access to staff areas.
- **Design safe systems of work.** For example, specifying when visits must be made in pairs, activities only carried out by team working or setting up a simple procedure for contacting lone workers regularly throughout their working day. Use the checklists at Appendix 1 to help you draw up appropriate safe systems of work. You should adapt them for your service.
- Provide **adequate training and supervision.** For example, providing training in emergency procedures or first aid, and carrying out periodic management checks on site.
- Make sure the lone worker is given **adequate information and instruction** about the risks associated with their job, and the measures in place to protect them. You can do this by circulating copies of risk assessments and written procedures, through team meetings and toolbox talks.
- **Providing protective equipment,** such as panic alarms in fixed locations or personal alarms for mobile employees. You should consider all other risk control measures before relying solely on PPE. Alarms do nothing to prevent lone working problems, and their success as a control measure depends on someone being willing and able to provide help. A number of security systems are outlined in Appendix 2, along with a brief discussion of their individual problems and merits.

21. In practice, you'll probably need to use a combination of several control measures. Remember that as you move down the list, each measure requires an increasing level of management intervention and control. Elimination requires no intervention after the hazard has been removed. However, making sure PPE is correctly used requires a significant level of supervision. The law requires you to take action to reduce risks 'so far as is reasonably practicable'. This means that you should balance the cost of the control measures in terms of resources, including time, trouble, physical difficulty and finance, against the risk.

Supervision

22. Although lone workers can't be constantly supervised, you still have a duty to make sure that:
- a structured, consistent and proactive monitoring procedure is set up to check the performance and safety of employees who work alone
 - their health, safety and welfare is not compromised by lone working
 - they have access to help, guidance and support when necessary.

Remember you must be able to prove that you are actively monitoring their safety and well-being. You should consider keeping records of supervisory visits and other contacts, when drawing up your procedures.

23. The level and means of supervision must be based on the results of the risk assessment process. The higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. Employees new to a job, undergoing training or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied at first. You must decide when employees are competent to work alone or with reduced supervision. It shouldn't be left to individual employees to decide whether they require help.

Training

24. Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help. Lone workers must feel confident about their work and should not panic in unusual situations, for example, when dealing with an aggressive service user. Training needs for both individual employees and work activities should be highlighted by the risk assessment process, and through monitoring. You must make sure essential training for lone workers is arranged and that employees attend.
25. Lone workers must fully understand the risks and precautions of working alone. They should receive adequate training and information about the safe working procedures devised for their tasks. You must make sure your employees understand these and follow them.

Emergency arrangements

26. Lone workers must be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. The risk assessment should identify foreseeable events, for example, fire, sudden illness, accidents or aggressive incidents. You must draw up contingency plans and procedures to deal with each of these situations. Remember to include employees who work in other people's premises.
27. There must be an effective procedure for summoning emergency assistance. This should include:
 - how and when to raise the alarm, both within normal office hours and out-of-hours
 - the actions expected of staff receiving an emergency alert
 - a list of officers to be notified if an alert is received, such as senior managers or the HST
 - how to use and maintain any equipment, such as personal alarms, mobile phones, radios or pagers.
28. All procedures should be regularly tested to make sure employees know how to respond. Feedback from these exercises will also confirm whether procedures are working effectively, and allow any necessary changes to be made.
29. Derby Carelink runs an emergency monitoring for service lone workers. See Appendix 3 for more details.

30. It's important that lone workers have ready access to adequate first-aid facilities. You should provide mobile workers with a small first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. The risk assessment process may also reveal that some lone workers need a particular level of first-aid competence, or additional first-aid materials, such as sterile water.

Monitoring and review

31. You must review risk assessments on a regular basis, at least every 12 months. Review assessments **immediately** if there are any significant changes, such as:
- new or revised work practices
 - changes to job content or procedures
 - new work locations
 - new work equipment
 - major adjustments to working patterns.
32. You should use accident and incident reports to monitor the effectiveness of control measures, and highlight where further work is needed to protect lone workers. Similarly, any information from employees involved in testing emergency procedures must be fed into the review process.

Summary

33. Working alone is not illegal, but it can bring additional risks to a work activity. Both managers and employees have a range of responsibilities under this code. Here's a summary of them...

Managers

- Carry out lone working risk assessments in consultation with your employees.
- Devise and implement safe working procedures and emergency arrangements.
- Make sure employees have sufficient training and information to work safely.
- Monitor and review the assessments and procedures regularly.
- Make sure effective supervision and communication procedures are implemented.
- Report any accidents or aggressive incidents as required by the Council's policies. Investigate the circumstances and implement any action required to prevent a recurrence.

Employees

- Help with the risk assessment process.
- Follow the procedures devised to protect lone workers.
- Participate in any training identified as part of the risk assessment process.

- Raise any concerns about lone working procedures with their managers.
- Make sure their colleagues know where they are and what they are doing.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety. Make sure their work activities don't cause harm to others.
- Report any accidents or incidents of aggression.

Support and information

34. You can get advice and support from:
- the [Health and Safety Team](#) (HST) by calling 01332 **640748** or emailing employee.healthandsafety@derby.gov.uk.
 - **Occupational Health** (OH) by calling 01332 **640543** or emailing occupational.healthservice@derby.gov.uk.
35. All corporate health and safety (H&S) documents, including policies, guidance notes and forms, are available on:
- [iDerby](#). To find them from the homepage, go to Occupational Health and Safety and then choose an appropriate theme.
 - the [Schools' Information Portal](#) on the Council's website.

Safe working procedures

Managers' checklist

1. Have you identified all your lone workers? Are they:
 - aware of the hazards they may encounter and the measures in place to protect them
 - aware of known problems or sensitive issues with specific service users
 - fully trained to carry out their work safely
 - capable of working safely with the level of supervision agreed through risk assessment?

2. Are you confident that you've done all that is reasonably practicable to make sure they:
 - understand the importance of pre-planning work away from their base? This may include checking routes, service users' needs and history, travel arrangements and testing essential equipment.
 - leave a plan of their itinerary and emergency contact numbers with a nominated colleague
 - know their colleagues will respond in an emergency or if they fail to check in when expected
 - don't arrange to work outside 'normal' hours, unless it is absolutely necessary and additional control measures have been agreed
 - understand communication arrangements, such as standard checking in and emergency procedures. These arrangements must cover all working times, including outside 'normal' office hours.
 - must not go home straight from a visit or job unless they have informed you or the nominated check-in point
 - understand the control measures in place to protect them
 - have been consulted about the health and safety arrangements?

3. Do they
 - have any known medical condition that might increase the risk of lone working. If so, have you:
 - carried out a separate risk assessment for them
 - identified the work activities they can do without compromising their health or safety
 - specified the tasks they must **not** attempt
 - put additional control measures and reasonable adjustments in place?
 - appreciate that **you** need to be told about the hazards they encounter
 - know how and when to seek guidance and assistance about work problems

- understand when they must not carry out a work activity alone, and why
- know how to end work activities if they feel threatened, and that you will support them in their decision
- understand the importance of sharing information with others, such as the identities of violent and aggressive service users, known problems with equipment and work procedures
- know their responsibilities for their own safety
- carry a personal alarm, radio or mobile telephone in case of emergency? If so:
 - do you know the telephone number or call sign
 - do they regularly test and maintain the equipment
 - can they easily get replacement equipment or parts?
- know how to report accidents and incidents, and where to get forms?

Employees' checklist

Managers should use this to draw up a service-specific checklist for their lone workers, based on risk assessment. Some of the points may not apply to your work activities or procedures.

4. Have you:
 - been given clear written information about agreed safe working procedures
 - been trained to do your job safely
 - checked whether there are any additional risks linked to your places of work, such as extreme temperatures or ongoing construction work
 - checked case histories and aggression and violence lists if you are visiting and
 - there are known problems with a service user
 - you may be giving bad news
 - you are carrying out enforcement activities
 - left details with your manager of:
 - where you will be going and when you will be there
 - emergency contact numbers
 - any plans to go straight home from your last job?
 - made arrangements to inform your manager about any possible changes of plan
 - told your manager of any concerns you have about lone working, including any new hazards encountered, and problems with procedures or equipment
 - told your line manager about any medical condition that may affect your safety

- checked that your equipment, such as radio, telephone or personal alarm works properly. Replace batteries or charge them up before they fail. Replace faulty or spent equipment straight away.
 - checked transport arrangements, such as routes, timetables and change if required for public transport
 - carried out pre-start vehicle checks, as instructed, to make sure your vehicle won't let you down?
5. Before you set off, have you got:
- your official identification card? Don't use personal ID, such as a driving licence instead.
 - any equipment you may need
 - emergency and standard contact numbers readily to hand if you won't remember them?
 - any medicines, inhalers or treatments you may need?

SECURITY SYSTEMS

1. Different systems are available to improve employee security. Each system has its own merits and limits. **All** require written support procedures, including training and testing, to make sure employees know how to use them.

Door entry systems or coded keypads

2. These are useful to prevent public access to employee areas. They protect both individuals and property. However, they only prevent unauthorised access if:

- access codes are kept secret and regularly changed
- the circulation of swipe cards is restricted
- all employees use the system correctly.

Installing such a system will not help lone workers summon help or raise the alarm, if they have an accident.

Two-way communication systems

3. These include mobile telephones or radios. They can be especially beneficial if used on an emergency only basis. Take into account:

- the cost of operating these systems
- their reception/transmission limits
- the type of work activity and its duration
- the availability of employees to receive calls and respond.

Hard wired panic alarms

4. These can be useful for receptions, interview rooms or cash offices. They must trigger an alarm in another area of the building, or directly to the local police. The problems that can occur with this type of system include:

- the accessibility of panic buttons. They must be within reach if needed, but not easy to trigger accidentally.
- lack of response. All employees must be trained to respond appropriately if the alarm is triggered. There must be cover arrangements in place to make sure someone is **always** available to respond.
- the speed of response. How long will it take for help to arrive?

Portable alarms

5. These produce a high-pitched shriek that should be loud enough to deter most attackers. A variety of models are available, most are small enough to fit into a coat pocket or handbag. The problems with these alarms include:

- their shriek may not be loud enough to summon help or scare off an attacker
- people tend to 'forget' to carry them or put them in inaccessible places
- remembering to test them regularly
- cost and effort of replacement.

Combination systems

6. These feature hand-held units that trigger a central alarm in the workplace or at the local police station. The disadvantages of this system include the availability and speed of response to an alarm call, and the personal discipline to carry and maintain the hand-held units.

LONE WORKER MONITORING INFORMATION SHEET

What is Derby Carelink?

Derby Carelink is an emergency monitoring service provided by Derby City Council. Our customer contact centre is open 24 hours each day, 365 days each year.

What is the Lone Worker system?

It is a simple system designed to give peace of mind to staff who work alone or who could be working in potentially vulnerable situations. This could include home visits, property surveys, out of hours working, escorted viewings, site visits, inspections or any other situation where the worker feels vulnerable or isolated.

How does it work?

The worker dials an automatic call manager system and records their own monitoring requirements using a PIN number. At the end of a pre-set time period, the service will automatically call the workers phone. If the worker fails to correctly answer the check in call, Operators at Carelink will automatically be alerted. The Operator will then follow the emergency protocol which will be agreed with you at the time you sign up for the service.

The system also has the facility of an immediate emergency call facility, allowing the worker to summon help discreetly.

All calls to the service are audio recorded for monitoring purposes.

For more information contact Derby Carelink by:

- **telephone: 01332 642203**
- **e-Mail: carelink@derby.gov.uk**