

Lone Worker Policy

Introduction

The Council recognises that some of its employees occasionally work alone and it is therefore necessary to ensure the health and safety of such workers in compliance with their legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

All employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. They also have responsibility for the health and safety of any contractors or self-employed people doing work for them.

Lone Workers

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. For example:

- A person working alone in a small workshop, office, petrol station or kiosk;
- people who work from home other than in low-risk, office-type work which is covered by separate guidance;
- people working alone for long periods, e.g. in factories, warehouses, leisure centres or fairgrounds; and
- people working on their own outside normal hours, e.g. cleaners and security, maintenance or repair staff.

Control of Risk - Employers

Employers have a duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary. This must include:

- Involving workers when considering potential risks and measures to control them;
- taking steps to ensure risks are removed where possible, or putting in place control measures;
- instruction, training and supervision; and
- reviewing risk assessments periodically or when there has been a significant change in working practice.

Employers should be aware that some tasks may be too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by an unaccompanied worker.

Employers must consult all their employees on health and safety matters.

Control of Risk - Employees.

Employees should take care of their own health and safety and that of others. They should:

- follow instructions of the employer;
- speak to their line manager if they have any concerns regarding lone working; and
- report any incident, accident or near miss whilst working alone.

Safe Working Arrangements

Employers should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, illness, accidents, violence and identify situations where employees are working alone.

The following should be considered:

- Does the workplace present a specific risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a safe way in and out for one person, e.g. for a lone person working out of hours where the workplace could be locked up?
- Is there a risk of violence and/or aggression?
- Are there any reasons why the individual might be more vulnerable than others and be particularly at risk if they work alone (for example if they are young, pregnant, disabled, or a trainee)?
- If the employee has a medical condition are they able to work alone?

Stress, Mental Health and Wellbeing

“Lone working can negatively impact on employees’ work-related stress levels and their mental health.

For example, the Stress Management Standards include factors such as relationships with, and support from, other workers and managers.” (HSE)

These factors have to be managed properly by the employers otherwise they can lead to work- related stress. Lone working can make it more difficult to support employees.

Procedures should be in place to allow direct communication between the employee and employer. “Managing work-related stress relies on understanding what is ‘normal behaviour’ for an employee and recognising abnormal behaviour or symptoms at an early point.” (HSE)

An employees’ stress levels or mental health may be affected if they feel abandoned or alone therefore communication is extremely important.

Supervision and Monitoring

The extent and level of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues.

Procedures must be in place to monitor lone workers as effective means of communication are essential. This will include:

- Communications via email, text, phone or face to face between lone workers and residents/Councillors;
- ensuring lone workers are accompanied to their car after Council meetings held in the evenings.

Illness, Accident or Emergencies

The assessment of the risks should identify foreseeable events. Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them. Information regarding emergency procedures should be given to lone workers. Lone workers should also have access to adequate first-aid facilities.

All workers should be within reasonable distance to the office panic alarm.

References

“Protecting lone workers, how to manage the risks of working alone.” HSE 03/20 INDG73(rev4) – Published 03/20

Health & Safety Executive website <https://hse.gov.uk>

www.hse.gov.uk/stress/signs.htm

This policy will be reviewed every two years.