

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management Arrangements

Core | Consider | Complex

Lone Working

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MC ratified Feb 2019

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Risk-reduction-guidance-for-lone-working

1. Success Indicators

The following indicators will demonstrate the required level of compliance:

- a) Managers have identified with their staff any Lone Working which is taking place
- b) Managers must consider whether this Lone Working is necessary and if the practice can be avoided.
- c) Managers must identify who is carrying out Lone Working and when this is taking place.
- d) Managers (with their staff) have assessed the risk of lone working and defined how the risk can be eliminated or reduced by introducing control measures.
- e) Control measure have been developed and communicated to all staff
- f) The use of control measures is monitored by managers.
- g) The risk assessment and any control measures are reviewed regularly and after any incident are reported.
- h) Staff are aware of the requirement to report any incidents which occur when working alone.

2. Overview

It is a legal duty to assess any significant risks of lone working in order to identify suitable controls and establish arrangements to manage these risks.

3. Management Arrangements

These arrangements will apply to employees working on county council premises or when engaged in county council activities.

“Lone working” refers to individuals who work by themselves without close or direct supervision who may be at risk when working alone. Some roles require an individual to work alone however working alone is not considered to be hazardous under normal conditions and it does not, in itself, create a hazard.

Lone working may be found in a wide range of situations which can be site based or mobile. Examples that *may* be considered as lone working are;

- Where individuals are physically separated from colleagues e.g. reception areas
- working outside normal working hours e.g. “on call” staff
- working alone in the community e.g. libraries
- working where they are not in control of the premises e.g. visiting sites or homes of citizens
- Where they are the only member of staff present and / or may be without access to immediate assistance.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment process for lone working is the same as risk assessment for other hazards. Managers and staff must work together to identify those who may undertake lone working by the nature of the tasks being carried out and the location and duration of this work. Discussions with staff members should take place to identify if employees feel aspects of their work could involve hazardous lone working.

It must be considered whether the lone working is necessary and if the practice can be avoided. If eliminating lone working is not possible then a risk assessment must be undertaken and control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk identified and implemented. A list of issues to be considered and used to identify hazards that may exist when lone working takes place is available on the intranet. The information can be used in the risk assessment process.

Establishing safe working for lone working is no different from organising the safety of other activities therefore managers must conduct the risk assessment process as they would for any other work situation. There may be certain situations that can normally be classified as low risk e.g. agile working from home or touchdown centre and very basic control measures such as maintaining outlook calendars will be adequate.

Risk assessments for *site based* lone working should include:

- the provision of safe access and exit
- risk of violence
- safety of equipment or materials for use by the individual when on their own
- channels of communication in an emergency
- site security and security arrangements
- level and adequacy of on/off site supervision

Risk assessments for *mobile* lone workers should include:

- client risk assessment where applicable
- written arrangements for visits where necessary
- travelling between appointments
- reporting and recording arrangements
- communication and traceability
- personal safety/security

Managers must establish controls and precautions and these should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

If a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the activity to be undertaken safely by a lone worker, this should be defined in writing and arrangements for controlling the risk should be put in place e.g. written guidelines for working when two people or more may be needed.

Control measures for any lone working situation may include;

- Induction processes (e.g. dual visits/completion of training courses prior to lone working)
- Job specific instruction and training (e.g. in anticipating and diffusing potential conflict where lone workers may encounter this)
- Required levels of supervision (e.g. where this is appropriate for the individual, the job or the risk)
- Electronic devices and equipment (e.g. mobile phones, automatic warning devices or alarms)
- Written working procedures (e.g. signing in and out of base, keeping to written schedules)

Incident reporting

Any incident which occurs involving a lone worker must be reported immediately and investigated thoroughly by the individual's manager. Where appropriate a Council Violent Incident Report must be completed. The manager must also review the lone working arrangements and the risk assessment as soon as possible after the incident.

4. Training and Information

It is important that individuals who undertake lone working are equipped with skills and techniques they require to deal with any significant risks that may arise. This may include training to deal with specific risks such as the risk of aggressive behaviours or training on emergency procedures. Staff must be able to operate any equipment allocated to them to be specifically used whilst working alone.

Information and instruction on all safe working procedures and risk assessments must be given to those involved in lone working and their knowledge must be updated as necessary.

Managers must ensure that training takes place and is refreshed regularly

5. Monitoring and reviewing arrangements

Risk assessments are to be reviewed following a significant change and/or if there is reason to believe they are no longer valid.

6. HSW Supporting Information

- Guidance – Risk reduction and control measures for lone working and violence & aggression
- Issues to be considered regarding lone working