



# LONE WORKING GUIDANCE

<b>Title</b>	Lone Working Guidance
<b>Who should use this</b>	All Staff
<b>Author</b>	SAC/Adapted by AVJB
<b>Approved by Management Team</b>	October 2017
<b>Approved by Joint Board</b>	N/A
<b>Reviewer</b>	Head of Valuation Services & Assistant ERO
<b>Review Date</b>	2020

## Review History

<b>REVIEW NO.</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>	<b>RELEASE DATE</b>
1	New	JULY 2017
2	REVISED	AUGUST 2017
3		
4		
5		
6		

# CONTENTS

1. What is Loneworking? .....	3
2. What are the Hazards? .....	3
2.1 Manual Handling.....	3
2.2 Illness or Injury .....	3
2.3 Fire and Security Issues .....	3
2.4 Welfare.....	3
2.5 Individual Conditions.....	4
2.6 Violence and Aggression .....	4
2.7 Transport.....	4
2.8 Environment .....	4
2.9 Stress.....	4
3. How do we Assess the Level of Risk? .....	5
4. What are Suitable Control Measures? .....	5
4.1 Systems of Work .....	5
4.2 Supervision.....	5
4.3 Equipment .....	5
4.4 Communications Systems .....	5
4.5 Information .....	6
4.6 Training .....	6
4.7 Responsibilities.....	6
5. Practical Guidance and Advice.....	6
5.1 Anticipating Violent Behaviour.....	6
5.2 Defusing the Situation .....	7
5.3 Non-Verbal Communication Skills .....	7
5.4 Verbal Communication Skills.....	7
6. Further Information.....	8
7. Relevant Legislation .....	8
Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment Form.....	9
Appendix 2 - Loneworking Risk Assessment Checklist.....	11

## **1. What is Loneworking?**

Loneworkers are employees whose work requires them to work on their own, without close or direct supervision, whether in a fixed location or moving from place to place (peripatetic). Employees may be loneworkers for all or only part of their work.

In the majority of situations, it is quite reasonable for employees to be asked to work alone, providing suitable and sufficient precautions have been taken to minimise risks to both their health and safety.

In some situations, the Board as an employer may decide that the hazards associated with a particular activity pose too high a risk for employees to work alone.

This guidance aims to assist Line Managers and employees in assessing the risks posed by existing activities that involve loneworking, to determine whether those risks are acceptable, and to identify suitable control and protective measures to maintain or reduce risks to a minimum.

## **2. What are the Hazards?**

All the hazards already associated with this work activity in general, plus any new ones introduced by the fact that the person is working alone. Some general hazards may pose a greater risk in situations where an individual is working alone. Some examples are considered below.

### **2.1 Manual Handling**

Manual handling tasks may become more difficult because no one is available to assist with heavy or awkward objects.

### **2.2 Illness or Injury**

Another example of different requirements may be those associated with provision of first aid. People working alone will often have to administer their own initial first aid, as well as contact Emergency Services if necessary. This may mean that loneworkers may require some first aid training. This applies particularly if they are working in very isolated conditions, far from a hospital or if they are working at a time when it is unlikely anyone else will be able to assist (e.g. outside normal office hours). In such instances, loneworkers may also need to be supplied with a personal basic first aid kit and access to means of communication.

### **2.3 Fire and Security Issues**

Where loneworkers are working alone in buildings, particularly large buildings, the implications of a fire are greater. This may be addressed partly through training, but also will place an emphasis on the need for quick and easy communications.

Workers attending security alarm call-outs in response to the Police may also be expected to check the security of a building before re-setting the alarm. Again, this may raise some complex training issues and highlights the importance of good communications.

### **2.4 Welfare**

What arrangements are in place for access to washing facilities and toilets for loneworkers? (The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) *do not* consider 'al fresco' to be a reasonable provision for outdoor workers such as agricultural workers!) Where can workers eat their meals?

## 2.5 Individual Conditions

Individual conditions may also need to be considered in relation to loneworking. If for instance someone is known to suffer from diabetes, or epilepsy, or another illness requiring medication during the working day, they may need special facilities for keeping and taking their medication. There will also be a more critical need for good communications systems in the event of them being taken ill, similarly for a pregnant worker. (The Board may wish to consult Occupational Health for Advice in certain cases.) Young workers or female workers may be considered to be particularly at risk in some environments or as a result of a particular activity or stakeholder.

## 2.6 Violence and Aggression

The hazard that tends to cause the most concern, although in reality it is thankfully relatively rare, is that concerning the threat to personal safety from verbal or physical attack. How much is known about stakeholder before they are first visited in their homes. Could helpful information be obtained from another service already providing services to this stakeholder? Could you share important information about this stakeholder or their neighbours or neighbourhood with another service provider? *(It is important to consult the Boards Data Protection Officer to ensure information sharing is in compliance with the Data Protection and Human Rights legislation respectively.)*

## 2.7 Transport

In most cases, loneworkers will use their own vehicles to drive themselves around. Peripatetic workers will often drive considerable mileages in the course of their work. Where employees drive their own vehicles, checks will be made to ensure that they have a valid UK Licence, valid insurance for business purposes and a valid MOT.

One common problem for drivers is the possibility of vehicle breakdown. Managers need to consider whether communications systems are suitable, whether recovery is available for vehicles, and to advise employees about the benefits of recovery cover for their own vehicles.

Consideration could be given to the placing of employees on training courses that advise on sensible precautions and responses in breakdown and accident situations. (The Police will sometimes assist in delivering this type of training).

If employees are relying on public transport for transport, you may need to consider contingency plans in the event of disruption of these services to ensure employees do not become stranded.

## 2.8 Environment

The environment itself may pose the hazard, for instance, poorly maintained buildings being inspected or inspections in socially deprived areas with a tendency for discarded needles and other drug-taking paraphernalia. The environment may be a site operated by another employer or organisation, in which case there should be arrangements in place for sharing information relevant to health and safety between the Board and the owner/occupier of the premises.

## 2.9 Stress

Working alone and having to deal with difficult or confrontational situations unaided can place loneworkers under pressure. In extreme circumstances this could result in stress related illnesses if appropriate control measures are not employed.

### **3. How do we Assess the Level of Risk?**

In the same way as we would any other risk, by using common sense and by carrying out a risk assessment if this is felt necessary. Only staff trained as Risk Assessors should carry out risk assessments. Risk Assessor training and its subsequent completion of the general Risk Assessment Form (Appendix1) is provided by the SAC Risk and Safety Team. Appendix 2 is a checklist to help identify those hazards that typically need to be risk assessed for loneworkers. *Please note that this list is not exhaustive and is provided only as guidance.*

### **4. What are Suitable Control Measures?**

The control measures suggested here are those relating specifically to loneworking rather than other aspects of the work activity being carried out by a loneworker.

#### **4.1 Systems of Work:**

Systems of work will naturally vary for each work activity but there are key elements that need to be included.

Details of proposed location, client's details, etc. left at main work base or with a supervisor or other nominated person whenever loneworking.

Details of proposed travelling route, times and order of visits to be left at base or with the nominated person.

Procedures for informing supervisor or nominated person of safe completion of shift/visit(s) – this is particularly important at the end of the day if the loneworker is going straight home from their last visit.

Procedures to be followed if a loneworker fails to make pre-arranged contact with the nominated person.

#### **4.2 Supervision**

Whilst direct supervision is unlikely in loneworking situations, there still needs to be some arrangement for monitoring and advising staff at work. This may be achieved through phone calls during the work period, regular meetings through the week, or maybe site visits by the Line Manager.

In the longer term, supervision needs to include regular reviews of the individual's work activities and conditions. This ensures that they are managing, planning and prioritising their work in order to minimise any potentially detrimental impact of isolated working conditions on their effectiveness, health and well-being.

#### **4.3 Equipment**

This might include PPE and possibly panic alarms if appropriate. All equipment must be assessed for suitability for the task, environment, hazard and individual prior to issue. There must be measures in place for suitable storage, maintenance and replacement of all equipment, as well as reporting procedures for defects in equipment.

#### **4.4 Communications Systems**

This may be a simple written procedure explaining how to use the internal 'phone system outside office hours, or could be the issue of mobile telephones, or other equipment to enable use of public 'phones such as 'phone cards etc. Not all loneworking activities will require the issue of

individual 'mobile 'phones, but there may be situations where they really are the best means of ensuring that employer and loneworker can keep in touch. A pool of mobile 'phones are available for visits by all staff and in particular loneworkers. The Board continually reviews loneworker-monitoring systems available to achieve improvement and refinement.

#### 4.5 Information

Where there are health and safety issues that pose a risk to a loneworker arising from the stakeholder themselves, their family, neighbours, pets or neighbourhood, it is important that we put in place mechanisms for sharing this information with other potentially affected organisations. As mentioned earlier, we have a duty to comply with Data Protection and Human Rights legislation, but we also have a higher duty through the Health and Safety at Work Act to supply any information to employees that is necessary to protect them at work. The Board will, in co-operation with the three Ayrshire Councils, continue to investigate the suitability and feasibility of implementing a corporate database for the storing of relevant information.

#### 4.6 Training

As well as the general job-related and general health and safety training that may be needed for the work activities, there may be a call for additional training in relation to loneworking. This could include for instance:

- Dealing with potentially threatening behaviour, violence and aggression
- Driver safety
- Basic first aid
- Local monitoring procedures
- Fire Safety

The Board will continue to investigate and make available appropriate training in the areas listed above.

#### 4.7 Responsibilities

Managers must ensure that employees, where appropriate, carry out risk assessments. They must also oversee the risk assessment process to make sure that risk assessments are carried out, signed off, actioned and reviewed as necessary. They must implement suitable control measures identified through the risk assessment, through advice from the Boards HR Representatives, SAC, the relevant enforcing bodies, or as stipulated by the pertinent legislation.

Employees must co-operate with their Line Managers by attending relevant training and conducting risk assessments where necessary. They must act in accordance with any instruction given with respect to control measures and precautions. Employees must use any equipment provided for their safety properly, and report any defects in that equipment immediately to their line manager or other nominated person.

### 5. Practical Guidance and Advice

Whilst working on your own you will be required to work responsibly using commonsense and your own experience of working in such situations. Some practical advice that may assist whilst working alone is as follows:-

#### 5.1 Anticipating Violent Behaviour

Although some attacks cannot be predicted, it is possible to identify certain behaviour that may be the prelude to an assault, such as:-

- Increased restlessness, body tension, pacing about, excitability
- Raised voice/shouting, erratic movements
- Tense angry facial expression
- Refusal to communicate, withdrawal
- Verbal threats or gestures

## 5.2 Defusing the Situation

The person you are visiting may be upset about something we have done (increased valuation or banding) or just be wound up about various issues and take it out on you as representing “the Taxman”. You can help in this situation by:-

- Appear and remain calm and self-controlled
- Ensure your own “body language” is not threatening
- Engage with the other in conversation
- Maintain adequate distance
- Know when to leave

## 5.3 Non-Verbal Communication Skills

You should be aware of your body language and the signals you send to other people:-

### Eye Contact:

This should be appropriate, as in normal interaction. It is important not to stare but equally important not to avoid eye contact.

### Body Position:

A head-on, fact-to-face position is confrontational and aggressive so avoid it. Turning the body at an angle to the aggressor and putting body weight on your back foot changes the profile of the body and assist with defensive responses and is a signal that aggression is not intended.

### Personal Space:

An aggressive individual has an increased requirement for personal space. Being too close tends to encroach upon the person and increases tension.

## 5.4 Verbal Communication Skills

### Tone of Voice

Speak slowly, in a calm voice, using short clean sentences and simple language. However avoid sounding patronizing or superior. Speak, as far as practicable, as one adult to another.

When attempting to de-escalate potentially aggressive situations you must communicate effectively and purposefully. The following guidelines should be followed:

- Allow the individual space and time to voice concerns/complaints
- Demonstrate concern and understanding through active listening
- Reflect the individuals mood to acknowledge their feelings.

## **6.0 Further Information**

### **Risk and Safety Team**

Property & Risk  
South Ayrshire Council  
Newton House  
30 Green Street Lane  
Ayr KA8 8BG  
Tel: (01292) (61) 2965  
Fax: (01292) (61) 2910

### **Occupational Health**

South Ayrshire Council  
12 Bath Place  
Ayr KA7 1DP  
Tel: 01292 (61) 2139

### **Health and Safety Executive**

1st Floor  
Mercantile Chambers  
53 Bothwell Street  
Glasgow G2 6TS  
Tel: 0141 275 3000

### **Employment Medical Advisory Service (EMAS)**

375 West George Street  
Glasgow G2 4LW  
Tel: 0141 275 3000

Working Alone in Safety INDG 73 (rev), ISBN 0 7176 1507 3, HSE  
Working Alone – A health and safety guide on loneworking for Safety Representatives, UNISON

## **7. Relevant Legislation**

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974  
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999  
First Aid at Work Regulations 1981  
Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992  
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002  
Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992  
Data Protection Act 1998  
Human Rights Act 1998  
Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

### Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment Form

<b>Description of Task/Activity</b>		<b>Directorate</b>		<b>Assessor(s)</b>	
		<b>Service</b>			
		<b>Reference No</b>		<b>Last Review Date</b>	

Persons Identified at Risk (Direct and Indirect)  
*Consider those especially vulnerable (young/inexperienced workers, members of the public, school pupils, the elderly, residents and contractors)*  
**N.B.** New and expectant mothers require a separate risk assessment

<b>Severity</b>	1. Minor: Near miss incident or minor injury	<b>Likelihood</b>	1. Unlikely
	2. Moderate: Injury / Ill health		2. Possible
	3. Major: Serious injury or ill-health		3. Likely
	4. Critical: Significant injuries and cases of ill-health		4. Very Likely
	5. Catastrophic: Single or multiple fatality		5. Almost Certain

	Hazards Identified	Person(s) at Risk	Types of Loss/ Injury/Ill Health	Current Control Measures
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

<b>Risk Rating Number (RRN) with existing Control Measures:</b>	<input type="text"/>	x	<input type="text"/>	=	<input type="text"/>
	<b>Severity</b>		<b>Likelihood</b>		<b>Risk Rating</b>
<b>HIGH:</b> High = 12 to 25	<b>MEDIUM:</b> Med = 4 to 10			<b>LOW:</b> Low = 1 to 3	

Additional Recommended Control Measures	Action By	Planned Completion Date	Date Implemented
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

<b>Risk Rating Number (RRN) after implementation of additional Control Measures:</b>	<input type="text"/>	x	<input type="text"/>	=	<input type="text"/>
	<b>Severity</b>		<b>Likelihood</b>		<b>Risk Rating</b>
<b>HIGH:</b> High = 12 to 25	<b>MEDIUM:</b> Med = 4 to 10			<b>LOW:</b> Low = 1 to 3	
<b>Name of Assessor(s)</b> <small>(PRINT)</small>	<b>Assessment Date</b>				
<b>Assessor(s) Signature(s)</b>	<b>Review Date</b>				
<b>Designation</b>	<b>Assessment Reviewed by</b>				
<b>Name of Manager /Person Responsible for ensuring above is implemented</b> <small>(PRINT)</small>	Comments:				
<b>Signature</b>					
<b>Designation</b>					

## Appendix 2 - Loneworking Risk Assessment Checklist

Potential Hazard Criteria	Yes	No
<b>Environment:</b>		
Client's Homes		
Council Buildings Outside Office Hours		
Isolated, rural areas		
Socially deprived locations		
Homeworking		
Other Organisation's premises/ site		
<b>Activities</b>		
Cash Handling		
Manual Handling of Objects		
Moving and Handling of People		
Use of Machinery		
Use of Hazardous Substances		
Contact with Biological Hazards		
Working with Live Electricity		
Use of Access equipment		
Close contact with people with history or violent or aggressive behaviour		
<b>Employees</b>		
Young Persons		
Inexperienced		
Vulnerable to aggressive/ violent behaviour		
Vulnerable to stress		
Previous relevant Ill Health		
<b>Transport:</b>		
Council vehicles used		
Leased vehicles used		
Own vehicles used		
Licence checks		
Insurance checks		
MOT checks		
Vehicle recovery cover		
Public transport used		

Potential Control Criteria	N/A	Yes	No
<b>Training:</b>			
Induction training received			
Job-specific training received			
<b>Dealing with violence and aggression</b>			
Manual Handling/ Moving and Handling			
Use of Chemicals			
Biological Hazards			
Use of equipment			
Personal/ Driver Safety			
Other			
<b>Communications:</b>			
Landline 'phones available			
Mobile 'phone available			
Pagers issued			
'Phone cards issued			
Radio 'phones issued			
<b>Monitoring:</b>			
Itinerary of work visits kept at work base			
Itinerary includes addresses of locations			
Itinerary includes intended timetable			
Itinerary includes intended travel routes			
'Phone contact after each visit			
'Phone contact at end of day			
<b>Provision of Information:</b>			
Information about client based hazards shared with other service providers			
Information from owner/ occupier of other business premises where loneworker could be working.			