

A risk assessment should be undertaken of:

- the working practices for a lone worker;
- the working environment provided by the employer for an employee.

The risk assessment would be part of the Health and Safety at Work Policy of an Employing Body.

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1. Working practices for a lone worker

Lone workers include those who:

- work away from an office base (e.g. visiting)
- work outside normal working hours (e.g. cleaners)
- are the only person on the premises (e.g. administrator, caretaker)
- work in the same building as colleagues but in a space on their own (e.g. receptionists)

At times, many district employees will be in situations where they are a 'lone worker'. The recommendations below try to be realistic about what can and cannot be put in place. Whilst it must be recognised that the district, as an employer, does not have the structure associated with a large business, it aims to be a good employer who is concerned about the safety of its employees.

Many lay employees work on a part-time basis, from their own home and so it is equally important to have a system in place to account for their safety too. It is important to note that lone workers maybe at higher risk of being seriously harmed by hazards at work because there may not be anyone to support or help them in the event of an accident or illness. The district must ensure that it trains, supervises, and monitors the provision of robust health and safety practices for its employees, as part of its overall duty of care.

2. Responsibilities of the employer

- To assess the 'reasonably foreseeable risks' (e.g. Can callers be seen clearly before opening the office door? Does the Youth Club finish at the same time as the local football match? Does the cleaner work late at night and need to use an un-lit passageway to get home?)
- To ensure a system is in place for calling for help if there is a problem on the premises.
- To keep on file in a secure place, the employee, and their next-of-kin contact phone numbers and, if used for work purposes, their vehicle registration details.
- To keep records of any health issues that may affect the employee whilst working alone and review this as necessary.
- To ensure that a system is in place so that the employer knows that an employee is safe when working on their own either on or off the premises.
- To provide all employees making home visits with a mobile phone or reimbursement of costs incurred for work-related calls made.
- To ensure that the employee receives a Health and Safety Induction training and that the Certificate of Employers Liability is displayed in the office at all times.
- Check that insurance cover adequately covers the work to be undertaken.
- Provide an accident book and ensure that it is kept up to date at all times.

- To ensure the availability of appropriate and adequate personal protective equipment for mandatory use by employees as necessary.

In relation to a lone worker risk assessment, consideration should also be given to:

- the remoteness of the work place;
- potential communication problems;
- potential for verbal and physical abuse and violence;
- Vulnerability of lone workers to feelings of isolation, stress, anxiety and depression;
- Whether or not all the plant, equipment, materials etc can be handled safely by one person;
- Whether or not the person is medically fit and able to work alone;
- How the lone worker will be supervised effectively;
- How the lone worker will get help in an emergency such as assault, vehicle breakdown, accident;
- Whether or not there is adequate first aid cover and the lone worker's capacity to administer this on themselves before help arrives.

3. Responsibilities of the employee

- To take reasonable care for own safety;
- To report any incidents of violence or aggressive behaviour;
- To arrange to meet unknown individuals in a public place, preferably with another person present;
- If making a home visit, to make sure somebody else knows the location and timings and to ensure they have a switched on working mobile phone at all times;
- If practical, to leave a note stating who and where you are visiting and how you will get there;
- To consider a 'buddy system'..
- To consider carrying a personal alarm
- To always stay alert and to be 'streetwise' and vigilant.

Useful Links:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.htm>