

Today's Topic/Issue

Lone working means working by yourself without close or direct supervision and where there are no other employees present. It is important to note that no set duration marks you as a lone worker. You can be a lone worker for all the time or for very infrequent periods.

QUICK QUIZ

What risks are increased by working alone?



High Risk Activities

Following UK Health & Safety legislation, Lone working is not acceptable where risk cannot be reduced to a safe level through controls, supervision, or emergency arrangements:

- **Dangerous machinery/processes** – where serious injury could occur and help wouldn't be immediate
- **Hazardous substances (high risk)** – where exposure could cause rapid harm requiring urgent assistance
- **Confined spaces** – entry generally not suitable due to rescue and emergency requirements
- **Working at height (higher risk tasks)** – where a fall could cause incapacitation with no rescue plan
- **High-risk electrical work** – especially live work or high-voltage fault finding without supervision or isolation controls
- **Violence or aggression risk** – where there is a foreseeable risk of confrontation or harm
- **Emergency response / unknown hazards** – where situations are unpredictable and require team support and backup



Staying Safe Whilst Lone Working

- Do follow policy procedures and make yourself aware of control measures in place to maintain your personal safety
- Do carry a personal alarm if one has been provided to you – check that it works before each shift
- Do ensure that you have access to a means of communication e.g. mobile phones, two-way radios
- Do know how often you should contact a line manager or colleague
- Do ensure that your line manager/colleague always knows your whereabouts
- Do know what to do if you get into an emergency
- Do know what to do if you ever feel threatened or in a dangerous situation. Refer to your training on conflict avoidance
- Do report any defective equipment to your line manager
- Do wear personal protective equipment if required



Lone Working

Lone working may be found in a wide range of situations such as:

- Working from home
- Working alone on site or in premises
- Working away from the normal place of work, such as attending meetings off site, carrying out contract work, construction work or visiting customers.

Whilst employers must ensure that all the systems and assessments are in place to keep their employees safe, workers have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves, and other people affected by work activities

How can we control the risks?

Employers assess risks to lone workers before lone working can be carried out.

Once the risks have been assessed control measure can be put in place:

- Additional instruction, training and supervision
- A consideration for 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, have a medical condition or are a trainee)
- Providing suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communications, especially in an emergency

Reviewing risk assessments periodically or when there has been a significant change in working practice. This may include:

- being aware that some tasks may be too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by an unaccompanied worker
- where a lone worker is working at another employer's workplace, informing that other employer of the risks and the required control measures
- when a risk assessment shows it is not possible for the work to be conducted safely by a lone worker, addressing that risk by planning to provide help or back-up. An example of these is personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEP)



QUICK QUIZ

“What risks are increased by working alone?”

Fire Evacuation	Make sure that teams are aware of the fire evacuation route and know the process to follow in the event of a fire. Lone workers have no one else to help them escape.
Manual Handling	Some manual handling activities cannot be completed by a single person. If employees can manual handle on their own, make sure they follow the correct manual handling techniques
First Aid	Lone workers should be first aid trained. The risk assessment will determine if first aid training or first aid materials are required beforehand.
Working at Height	Lone workers must always follow the best practise of working at height such as maintaining 3 points of contact and using straps and harnesses if necessary. The risk assessment may deem working at height to be too risky for lone workers.
Security	Employees working outside of normal hours or in a dangerous space may need additional security such as an emergency phone or access to the lone worker system.
Lone Travelling	When travelling alone it is important that employees plan ahead. Line managers or colleagues should be informed of leaving times and estimated times of arrival. In the case of emergency, lone travellers should keep a fully charged phone to hand with emergency contact numbers pre-programmed. When traveling valuables need to be kept out of sight, including documents such as passports or travel tickets.



Toolbox Talk - Attendance Sheet

Site/Department Name:

Trainer Name:

Signature:

Toolbox Talk Topic:

Date:

Name	Signature

Any further feedback or questions from attendees regarding this toolbox talk topic?