



WOCA - Lone Worker Policy

Approved by WOCA Committee: November 2017

Date of next review: November 2020

Introduction

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision or support. This includes those who work outside our normal hours (such as locking / unlocking duties) and workers who are physically isolated within the same building or site as other workers.

Purpose

This policy is designed to alert employees to the risks presented by lone working; to identify individual responsibilities and to describe procedures designed to minimise risks. It is not intended to overstate the risks of lone working but to give a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

Responsibilities

WOCA has responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of all its workers as well as the health and safety of those affected by the work, eg centre users, volunteers and other visitors.

Employees have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their work and to co-operate with management in meeting our legal obligations.

Assessing and controlling the risk

There are no legal restrictions on working alone, but the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 apply. These lay a responsibility upon the employer to identify hazards of the work, assess the risks involved and put measures into place to avoid or control risks.

Managers will carry out risk assessments of each WOCA lone worker upon appointment and thereafter whenever there is a change or when a routine review would take place anyway. The risk assessment will be prepared in consultation with the individual, the appropriate safety representative and the Centre Manager and will be recorded in writing so that it may easily be reviewed.

The risk assessment will determine the correct level of supervision. Under no circumstances is a lone worker authorised to undertake high risk activities for which an additional person is required to be present, such as working in a confined space or electrical work.

If a lone worker discovers a building has been broken into, he/she must not enter alone but should wait for support.

Safe working arrangements

When establishing safe working arrangements for lone workers, we will firstly consider whether one person can adequately control the risks of the job. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, eg fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

Individual considerations

Once the role has been fully assessed, we will consider whether the individual worker is fit and suitably experienced to work alone, and whether he/she has any medical condition which may create a risk if working alone.

It is important that any existing medical conditions which may make workers unsuitable for working alone are properly considered. Where necessary, such assessments will be conducted using a medical practitioner appointed by WOCA.

Training

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. Lone workers must be sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions of each task they undertake. They should ensure they are familiar with emergency exits and first aid facilities, and are competent to deal with circumstances which are new, unusual e.g. when to stop work and seek advice, or how to handle aggressive/difficult visitors to the Centre.

Illness and accident

Lone workers must report any illness or accident, however minor, to the Centre Manager.

Employers' Liability Insurance

All lone workers will be insured against workplace injury or disease under our Employers' Liability Insurance.