NOT A LONE WORKER

Lone-working policy template

For UK employers

This template is a starting point. Tailor it to your organisation's activities and risks, and take competent advice where needed.

This is an independent template. It is not an official HSE document and does not replace legal or health and safety advice.

Organisation	
Policy owner	
Version	
Date issued	
Next review date	

1. Purpose

[Organisation name] is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of everyone who works alone or without close or direct supervision. This policy sets out how we identify the risks of lone working, how we reduce them, and what happens if a lone worker cannot be contacted or needs help.

2. Scope

This policy applies to [employees / workers / contractors / volunteers — delete as appropriate] who, as part of their work, regularly or occasionally:

- work alone at a fixed site, for example a shop, workshop, office or plant room;
- work away from a fixed base, for example visiting customers' homes, sites or remote locations;
- work outside normal hours, for example early mornings, evenings, nights or weekends;
- travel alone for work, including driving.

3. Legal background

Working alone is not against the law in general, but employers must manage the risks before people work alone. The main duties are:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, section 2: employers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees, including the provision of information, instruction, training and supervision (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/section/2).
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, regulation 3: employers must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to their employees and others affected by their work, review it when it may no longer be valid, and record the significant findings where they employ five or more people (www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/regulation/3).
- HSE guidance INDG73, “Protecting lone workers: How to manage the risks of working alone” (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.htm). It says employers should provide training, supervision, monitoring and support for lone workers.
- Where an incident is reportable, the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) apply (www.hse.gov.uk/riddor).

Other duties, such as those on violence at work, driving for work, manual handling and data protection, may also apply to your activities.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Senior management / directors	Provide the resources to apply this policy. Review it at least once a year and after any serious incident or near miss.
Line managers / supervisors	Carry out or review lone-working risk assessments. Agree check-in arrangements with each lone worker. Respond to missed check-ins using the escalation steps below. Keep records.
Lone workers	Follow the agreed arrangements. Check in when asked. Tell their manager about new hazards or changes to their plans. Stop work and seek help if they feel unsafe. Never take risks to complete a job.
Nominated emergency contacts	Be reachable during the lone worker's hours. Know what to do when contacted. Call the emergency services where there is genuine concern.
[Health and safety lead / competent person]	Advise on risk assessment, training and incident review.

5. Risk assessment

Before anyone works alone, the manager will assess the risks using the lone-worker risk assessment template (or equivalent). The assessment will consider the task, the place, the person and the time of day, including:

- violence, aggression or abuse from the public;
- medical conditions, fitness and any need for adjustments;
- remote locations and the time it would take help to arrive;
- mobile signal, lone-worker devices or other ways to call for help;
- travel and driving, including fatigue;
- manual handling, equipment and machinery;
- stress, isolation and wellbeing;
- out-of-hours working and the security of the premises.

Assessments will be reviewed at least once a year, when the work changes, and after any incident or near miss.

6. Activities not to be done alone

The following activities must not be carried out by someone working alone unless a specific risk assessment shows that the risk is acceptable and the controls are in place. [Edit this list to suit your organisation.]

- work in confined spaces, or work at height that needs a second person to rescue or foot a ladder;
- work on or near live electrical equipment, or with hazardous substances where a second person is needed for emergency response;
- handling cash or valuables in circumstances that put the person at risk of robbery;
- visits where there is a known history of violence or aggression, unless agreed controls are in place;
- any task where the risk assessment says a second person is needed;
- work by a person whose medical condition or training means they should not work alone for that task.

7. Check-in and escalation arrangements

Each lone worker will have an agreed check-in arrangement recorded by their manager. As a minimum:

- Before the shift or visit, the worker confirms where they will be, what they will be doing and when they expect to finish.
- The worker checks in at the agreed times, by [phone call / text / email / other method].
- A named person is responsible for receiving check-ins during the shift, and has a named deputy.
- The worker tells that person if their plans change, and checks in again when they finish.

If a check-in is missed, the named person will follow the escalation steps in the supervisor check-in and escalation checklist. In summary:

1. Try to contact the worker straight away by phone, then by any other agreed method.
2. If there is no response after [10 / 15] minutes, contact the worker's nominated contacts and anyone else who may know where they are.
3. If there is still no response, or if at any point there is genuine concern for the worker's safety, call the emergency services on 999 and give the worker's last known location.
4. Tell the senior manager on call, and keep a written record of the times and actions.

8. Emergency procedures

- In an emergency, call 999 first. Do not wait for the manager's permission.
- Lone workers should know the address or location of where they are working, and how to describe it to the emergency services.
- Workers who feel threatened should leave the situation if they can, and are never expected to put themselves at risk to protect property.
- After calling 999, tell the manager or emergency contact as soon as it is safe to do so.

9. Training and information

Lone workers and the managers who supervise them will be trained in this policy before they start working alone, and refreshed [every 12 months]. Training will cover the risks of their work, check-in arrangements, how to call for help, personal safety and dealing with aggression, and the use of any equipment or devices provided. Records of training will be kept.

10. Incident reporting and investigation

- All incidents, injuries, threats, near misses and missed check-ins that led to escalation will be reported to the line manager as soon as possible and recorded.
- Serious incidents will be investigated and the risk assessment updated.
- Incidents that are reportable under RIDDOR will be reported to the relevant enforcing authority by [responsible person]. See www.hse.gov.uk/riddor for what must be reported.
- Workers will be supported after an incident, including access to [counselling / employee assistance / occupational health].

11. Monitoring and review

The policy owner will check that the arrangements work in practice, for example by reviewing check-in records, missed check-ins and near misses. This policy will be reviewed at least once a year and after any significant change or incident.

12. Consultation with workers

We will consult lone workers, and their safety representatives where there are any, when we draw up and change these arrangements. Workers are encouraged to raise concerns at any time, and will not be penalised for doing so. Any monitoring of workers will be proportionate, explained to them in advance and handled in line with data protection law and our privacy notice.

13. Sign-off

Name	Role	Signature	Date

Further reading: HSE, Protecting lone workers (INDG73), www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.htm; HSE lone working topic page, www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working.

Want help setting up a check-in procedure? See how Not A Lone Worker works — www.notaloneworker.com