

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Lone Working Policy and Procedures



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HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Lone Working Policy and Procedures

JUNE 2007

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1. Introduction -

- 1.1 So far as is reasonably practicable, the Council will ensure that employees and self employed Contractors who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time, are protected from risks to their health and safety.

Solitary working may expose employees and others to certain hazards. Where complete elimination is not possible the risks must be reduced to an acceptable level.

This Policy and procedures have been developed to help managers and supervisors to deal with the health and safety issues surrounding lone working. It sets out what they should do to ensure that employees are not put at an unacceptable level of risk when they work alone. The procedures include steps which managers must take to check that they have done or need to do to assess and prevent risks to lone workers.

2. Working Alone

- 2.1 Working alone is not illegal but it can bring additional risks to a work activity. The Council has developed policies and procedures to control risks and protect employees, and employers should be aware of and follow them. Apart from employees being sure that they are capable of doing the job on their own, the three most important things to be certain of are that :-

- The lone worker has full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which he or she is being exposed.
- A colleague or supervisor knows the whereabouts of a lone worker and what he or she is doing.
- The lone worker knows what to do if something goes wrong.

3. Arrangements for securing the Health and Safety of Employees risk

- 3.1 The Council will carry out the assessment of risks of working alone carried out under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. The assessments will confirm whether work can actually be done safely by one unaccompanied person. The assessment will include the identification of hazards from, for example, means of access and/or egress, plant, machinery, goods, substances, environment and atmosphere ect. Particular consideration will be given to:-

- The remoteness or isolation of workplaces.
- Any problems of communication.
- The possibility of interference, including violence or criminal activity from other persons.
- The nature of injury or damage to health and the anticipated "worst case" scenario.

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4. Information and Training

4.1 Employers and others will be given all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved in working alone. Employees will be required to follow predetermined safe working practices and procedures which will include the provision of first aid facilities, communication procedures, and an awareness of such emergency procedures as appropriate. All employees are required to co-operate with these efforts to ensure safe working and report any concerns to management. [A suggested Training List can be found in Appendix 1.](#)

5. Safe Systems of Work

5.1 Rules and instructions will be developed to cover, for example:-

- Required ability of employees, eg,
 - Professional Training
 - Qualifications and Experience
 - Medical Fitness,
- Suitability of equipment, eg,
 - Quality of Tools
 - Insulation of Electrical Appliances
- Means of communication, eg,
 - Two way radio
 - Telephone
 - Remote manual or automatic alarm
 - Regular visits by competent person
- Provision of treatment for injuries, eg,
 - Portable first aid kit
 - Availability of first aiders
- Emergency and accident Procedures, e.g,
 - Means of summoning help
 - Means of raising the alarm
 - Rescue plans and equipment
 - Fire fighting equipment
- Maintaining contact with work colleagues who are aware of employees work commitments (i.e office, work diary) by way of phone calls/radio (periodic into office) and regular contact between Lone worker and Supervisor
- Training, e.g, for safe use of specialist equipment and processes ect.
- Suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be issued to any employees where the risk assessment has shown it to be necessary for personal safety. (For example, a personal attack alarm as well as a mobile phone may be identified as necessary PPE for an employee carrying out lone worker duties).

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- All accidents, dangerous occurrences or violence to an employee working away from the office must be reported to the Line Manager immediately. A form "Report of an injury or dangerous occurrence" must be completed by the Line Manager, in conjunction with the injured/affected employee. This form should be referred to the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor for inclusion in the Accident book and for investigation.
- Direct accompanied supervision, e.g, for trainees, young people or new recruits, who must be confirmed as competent to work alone before supervision is relaxed to the level of unaccompanied visits.

6. Defined Working Limits

- 6.1 Managers must establish clear procedures, setting limits of what can and what cannot be done whilst working alone. Clearly, this is impossible to define in general terms, but the general precautionary principle of "if in doubt, ask " should be advocated.
- 6.2 In certain circumstances, particularly when the risk rating(s) is considered high or where specific legal requirements exist, some, or all, of the above procedures may be contained within a written permit to work, without which the activity may not take place.

7. Who is a lone worker? -

- 7.1 Lone workers are simply those people who work by themselves, without close or direct supervision. This situation can occur in fixed establishments, where one person works in an area separate from others, or works outside normal hours.
- 7.2 More frequently it is staff working away from their fixed base. This includes Health & Safety Advisors, Planning Officers, Environmental Health Officers, Car Park Attendants, Neighbourhood Wardens and Revenues & Benefits Visiting and Investigative Officers, SSWM Supervisors, Home Workers and Public Convenience Attendants.
- 7.3 People will generally know when they are working alone, but there are situations where even when an office is normally crowded, people can be working in isolation for long or short periods. Managers should have procedures in place, relevant to the work activities, that recognise lone workers and ensure that they can work safely.
- 7.4 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone working as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision".

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8. Hazards of lone working –

8.1 People who work alone face the same hazards in their daily work as other workers. However, for lone workers the risk of harm is often greater. So it is essential that the risks of lone working are taken into account when risk assessments are carried out.

8.2 Hazards which lone workers may face may include –

- Accidents /Illness
- Emergencies arising out of the work
- The lack of first aid provision or someone to administer it
- Fire
- Inadequate provision of welfare facilities
- Violence from members of the public /physical attack/threatening behaviour/verbal abuse/attack by dogs/harassment
- Manual handling
- Stress arising from working in isolation
- Vehicle breakdown/road traffic accident/vehicle damage

9. Employers' legal duties -

9.1 There is no legislation that specifically prohibits working alone. However, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees, so far as is reasonably practicable.

9.2 In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, place a legal duty on employers to assess all risks to health and safety, including the risk of lone working. If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, then other arrangements must be put in place. *A General Guide to the Risk Assessment process can be seen in Appendix 2. A complete Risk Assessment guide can be obtained, and training arranged, by the Health & Safety Advisor.*

9.3 Employers are also under a duty to provide -

- Facilities for first aid under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Adequate welfare facilities and arrangements under the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Suitable equipment and training in their use under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 and the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- Suitable and sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

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- 9.4 All Accidents, Injuries and Dangerous Occurrences, including violent incidents, must be reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). **See fig. 5.1**

All threats of aggression or violence must be taken seriously, as should the production of a weapon or potential weapon. Where there has been an incident considered serious by the person affected, the Police should always be contacted by the '999' number prior to a call to the relevant Line Manager.

Where Officers are the target of equality and diversity issues themselves, e.g. Black Minority Ethnic or disabled staff, might suffer harassment or lack of co-operation on these grounds from members of the public, this would need to be reported to the Line Manager, who will monitor and deal with the Equality Impact Monitoring and Assessment.

- 9.5 In certain high risk activities there may be specific prohibitions on working alone, for example, work in confined spaces, excessive noise, electrical work near live conductors and working out of normal office hours.

But for most Council staff, their managers will need to ensure that in complying with their general legal duties to carry out risk assessment, they take full account of the risks of work carried out alone and make sure that these risks are avoided or reduced to a low level so far as is reasonably practicable.

A List of main activities, not exhaustive, undertaken by outside officers is shown in Appendix 3.

10. Risk assessment -

10.1 Assessing and preventing the risks of working alone - what does it involve ?

- 10.2 To address the risks associated with lone working, a risk assessment must be carried out by a 'competent person'. Risk assessment is a process of identifying what hazards exist in the workplace and how likely it is that they will cause harm to employees and others and how severe is the harm likely to be. It is the first step in deciding what prevention or control measures that employers, such as the Council, may need to take to protect their employees and people who come into contact with the employees carrying out their duties, from harm.

- 10.3 The need to assess the risks associated with any activity also applies to employees who work alone. The risk assessment process is the responsibility of the Manager and they should ensure that the hazards are identified and measures are put into place to avoid or control the risks. All available

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information including details from previous accidents/injuries/incidents, and consultation with Safety Representatives should be considered.

- 10.4 Control measures may include instruction, training, supervision, or protective equipment. Managers should ensure that control measures are used and a periodic review of the risk assessment takes place to ensure that it is still relevant.
- 10.5 It is important that employees are consulted on the risk assessment as they will be a valuable source of information and advice. Where risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, alternative arrangements should be considered (i.e additional employees).
- 10.6 Where a lone worker is working at another employer's workplace, that employer should inform the lone workers manager of any risks and control measures that should be taken. This will help the manager of the lone worker to properly assess the risks.
- 10.7 Risk assessment will decide on the level of supervision required. Where a high risk activity has been identified additional employees/resources must be considered before activities commence.
- 10.8 When carrying out risk assessments for lone workers, the Council provide General Risk Assessment Guidance, Policy and Procedures and Training as necessary.

11. Risks associated with lone working -

- 1.1 Establishing safe working practices for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees. Managers will need to have an understanding of relevant legislation and standards that apply to their work activities and then assess whether those requirements can be met safely by lone workers.
- 11.2 Lone workers face particular problems. Some of the issues which need special attention when planning safe working arrangements are covered by answering the questions below -

12 Can the risks be adequately controlled by one person? –

- 12.1 Lone workers should not be at any more risk than other employees. This may require additional risk control measures. Any precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Managers should identify situations where people work alone and consider the following –

- Environment –

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- a. Does the workplace present a special risk to lone workers?
- b. Is there a safe way in and out for one person

- Personal Safety –
 - a. Is there a risk of violence? Obtain as much information about the likelihood of violence as possible, either about the location or service users.
 - b. Take advice from other staff members, agencies or others involved. In the absence of evidence assume a worst case scenario.
 - c. Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
 - d. Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?

- Equipment and manual handling operations – for example –
 - a. Can any temporary access equipment, such as ladders or trestles, be safely handled by one person?
 - b. Can all of the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person? Consider if the work involves lifting objects too large for one person, or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.

13.1 Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone? -

Check that lone workers do not have a medical conditions that makes them unsuitable for working alone (seek occupational medical advice if necessary). Consider both normal and foreseeable emergencies that may affect individual employees.

14 What training is required? -

14.1 Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help, in situations that may be beyond the experience of staff members. Training will be critical in avoiding panic reactions in unusual or emergency situations. It is important that lone workers are trained in how to assess situations that are likely to escalate beyond their control and how to control the situation until it is resolved or assistance arrives. Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and able to understand the risks and control measures fully. Managers should set the limits as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone. They should ensure that employees are competent to deal with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, such as when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor, and how to handle aggression.

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15 How will the person be supervised? -

15.1 Lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision but it is still necessary to provide a level of supervision necessary for the lone worker to work safely.

The extent of the supervision required will depend on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle these risks. Lone workers new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job that presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied at first. The level of supervision required is a decision for managers and should be based on the findings of a risk assessment, the higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. It should never be left to individuals to decide whether they require assistance.

16 How will staff be monitored? –

16.1 Procedures will need to be put into place, by Managers/Supervisors, that monitor lone workers in a suitable manner to ensure their safety. These may include –

- Supervisors periodically visiting and observing people working alone.
- Confirmation of diary visits.
- Regular contact between lone worker and supervisor using either telephone or radio.
- Automatic warning devices that operate if specific signals are not received periodically from the lone worker.
- Other devices designed to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency and which are operated manually or automatically by the absence of activity.
- Checks that the lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task.
- It is important that if a warning is received or lone workers do not report on schedule that there is a procedure in place to locate and provide help to the lone worker if that is necessary.
- It is essential to cover out of hours working in any of these arrangements.

17 What happens in an emergency? -

- Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies.
- Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events.
- Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in how to follow them.
- Information about emergency procedures and danger areas should be given to lone workers who visit premises you control.

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- Lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit for treating minor injuries. Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need to be trained in basic first aid.

- Home working – a specific checklist has been produced for home working and should be used in conjunction with the above. The checklist can be obtained from the Health and Safety Advisor within the HR & OD Service.

18 Further assistance and advice –

18.1 Further advice, information and assistance is available from the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor.

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Appendix 1

Suggested Training

- **Managing Safely (Managers & Supervisors)**
- **Risk Assessment (Managers & Supervisors)**
- **Dealing with Violence and Aggression**
- **Customer Care**
- **Equality and Diversity**
- **Manual Handling**
- **Health and Safety Awareness**
- **Violence at Work**
- **Home Working**

Appendix 2

Establishing Level of Risk

1. Identify hazards.
2. Identify who is at risk (Employee, Public).
3. Assess the level of risk.

Risk Assessment chart

Likelihood	Severity				
	No Injury or Damage	Minor Injury	Absence from work (3days+)	Major Injury	Fatality or Severe Disability
Very Unlikely		LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Unlikely		LOW	LOW	MEDUIM	MEDUIM
Possible		LOW	MEDUIM	HIGH	HIGH
Likely		MEDUIM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Highly Likely		MEDUIM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH

4. Enable control measures to be sought and implemented to remove the risks, or minimise the risks so they are adequately controlled.
5. When planning to introduce lone working, employees must be consulted. This is a requirement of the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996, and Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977, in workplaces with a recognised Trade Union.

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6. Review Risk Assessment periodically.

Appendix 3

ACTIVITIES/TASKS UNDERTAKEN BY OUTSIDE OFFICERS

- **Home Visits**
- **Travelling to site**
- **Transporting equipment etc..**
- **Use of ladders/steps/equipment**
- **Industrial site/premises visits**
- **Working out of normal office hours**
- **Working in remote and isolated areas**
- **Working from home**
- **Building site visits**
- **Carrying out enforcement / surveillance duties**
- **Carrying loads in and out of vehicles**
- **Setting up equipment/seating etc.. for meetings at local village halls**
- **Caretakers securing buildings**
- **Handling money**
- **Maintenance work**
- **Working out in extreme weather conditions**
- **Working in kiosks/shops**
- **Monitoring Car parks**

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