

Supplementary Information: Lone Workers



Lone working is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as. 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.' This doesn't mean that the worker is physically alone, it means they are in a separate location to the rest of their team or manager.

These staff may be exposed to risk because there is no-one to assist them and so a risk assessment may be required.

The HSE says of lone workers :

Establishing a healthy and safe working environment for lone workers can be different from organising the health and safety of other employees. They should not be put at more risk than other people working for you.

It will often be safe to work alone. However, the law requires employers to think about and deal with any health and safety risks before people are allowed to do so.

Things you could consider to help ensure lone workers are not put at risk include:

- *assessing areas of risk including violence, manual handling, the medical suitability of the individual to work alone and whether the workplace itself presents a risk to them*
- *requirements for training, levels of experience and how best to monitor and supervise them*
- *making sure you know what is happening, including having systems in place to keep in touch with them*

Suggested Further Reading

Working Alone; Health and Safety Guidance on the Risk of Lone Working

Why is training particularly important for lone workers?

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in uncertain situations. Training may also be crucial in enabling people to cope in unexpected circumstances and with potential exposure to violence and aggression.

Lone workers are unable to ask more experienced colleagues for help, so extra training may be appropriate. They need to be sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions involved in their work and the location that they work in.

Employers should set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone. They should ensure workers are competent to deal with the requirements of the job and are able to recognise when to seek advice from elsewhere.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>

Supporting Staff that Regularly Work Alone (2010) Skills for Care

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Leadership-and-management/Lone-working/Supporting-staff-that-regularly-work-alone.pdf>