

Casualty Risk Solutions

Lone Workers work by themselves without close or direct supervision. They can be in fixed establishments or working away from their fixed base. This can include remote workers with no particular base. If unmanaged lone workers can develop their own unsafe systems of working which may result in accidents and claims. They can be at risk simply because they cannot be directly supervised and do not have access to normal facilities at a fixed base.

Best practice

✓	Avoid lone working, or where this is not feasible, develop a specific policy to manage it.
✓	Specific tasks and job roles which unavoidably involve or require a person to work alone are subject to a separate documented Risk Assessment, taking into consideration all relevant risk factors. These may be particular to the work environment, the nature of work itself or the individual e.g. Risk of violence/harassment, women and young persons, cash handling, night working, fitness of the individual.
✓	Following appropriate consultation with the workforce, develop suitable controls (procedures and devices) to contact/monitor the lone worker.
✓	Bespoke safe working procedures and guidance is incorporated into health and safety training for lone workers, which validates their competence and addresses individuals' particular needs.
✓	Technological solutions are utilised where assessed as appropriate e.g. tagging, lone working management software applications and alarms.
✓	All locations where individuals work alone are covered by a system ensuring that the area is suitable and well maintained with equipment free from defects.
✓	A pro-active system is in place for checking on the safety status of the lone worker at established intervals.
✓	The recruitment selection process takes account of the applicant's suitability to lone work.
✓	A system is in place for lone workers to summon assistance in emergency situations.
✓	Occupational health, absence management, and emergency and first aid arrangements are in place to cover lone worker requirements as per the rest of the workforce.



Legal requirements

There are few legal restrictions on lone working but the general duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (principles actionable under common law) and Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 will apply. The requirement to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and implementation of the necessary controls so far as is reasonably practicable will be crucial in determining whether the risk will be acceptable. A court's interpretation as to whether controls employed are 'suitable and sufficient' will arguably be more onerous in lone working situations. Other statutory legislation is applicable to lone working as to all other employees. When considering whether arrangements for lone workers are adequate employers should consult HSE and other guidance.

Guidance and useful information

- HSE: Working Alone (INDG73)
- GMB: Guide to working alone
- LHC: London Hazards Centre Fact sheet - Lone Working
- UNISON: Working Alone - A Health & Safety Guide on Lone Working for Safety Representatives

Further information

For more information please visit: www.QBEEurope.com/rs or email us on RS@uk.qbe.com

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5248CC/RiskManagementStandards/LoneWorking/September2015
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