

MAYFIELD SCHOOL

Lone Working Policy and Risk assessment



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The process of conducting a risk assessment for lone working is no different to that followed when assessing more conventional activities. A risk assessment should not be carried out in isolation but, rather, should involve the members of staff who will be carrying out the work. They will have an understanding of the hazards and risks involved and, in all probability, the controls necessary to prevent or reduce them.

The important point is to carry out the assessment systematically in the following way:

- Identify the hazards associated with the work and carrying it out unaccompanied
- assess the risks associated with the work and decide on the safe working arrangements to control these risks
- Record the findings of the assessment
- Implement the safe working arrangements x
- Monitor and review the safe working arrangements

The remainder of this guidance document discusses these steps in more detail.

Identify the hazards associated with the work and carrying it out unaccompanied:

The hazards associated with a task are likely to be the same whether it is carried out alone or accompanied, although the possibility of violence towards the lone worker, particularly if cash handling is involved, should always be considered. Those carrying out assessments

should therefore use the techniques they normally employ for hazard identification when considering the hazards of lone working.

Process:

Identify hazards specific to the work process which may create particular risks for lone workers, e.g. work on electrical systems, cryogenic gases, and work in the community.

Violence:

Identify the potential risk of violence. Is there a history of violence or threats to staff? Are women or young workers especially at risk if they work alone?

Individual:

Identify hazards specific to the individual, which may create particular risks for lone workers e.g. medical conditions, disabilities, female employees, expectant mothers, age, inexperience, etc.

Work Pattern:

Consider the lone worker's work pattern and how it relates to those of other workers, in terms of both time and geography.

Other:

Specify any additional hazards particular to the lone worker. Consider any emergency action that may be required.

Assess the risks associated with the work and decide on the safe working arrangements to control the risks:

Although working alone may not introduce any new hazards, the risks may differ significantly when a task is carried out unaccompanied.

Staff must complete the 'Home Visit Checklist' prior to any home visit. (see appendix 1)

Assessments may be conducted:

Should an assessment already exist for a task which is routinely conducted with others present, this assessment must be reviewed before permitting the same task to be conducted unaccompanied.

The reasons for assessing the risks of working alone are to establish:

- Whether the work can be done safely by an unaccompanied person;
- The arrangements necessary to ensure that an individual working alone is not exposed to greater risks than employees who work together.

Some of the issues, which need special attention when evaluating the risks and planning safe working arrangements, are as follows:

Can the risks be adequately controlled by one person?

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees and extra risk control measures may be required. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies such as fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

Those with responsibility for carrying out risk assessments should ask questions such as:

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

If working outside of normal hours, checks should be made to ensure that all exits from a building can be used as a means of escape in case of an emergency. Lone workers should not be expected to leave their workplace by way of dark corridors or stairways. Special arrangements may need to be made to ensure that lights are kept on in buildings when people are working outside normal hours.

- Can any necessary temporary access equipment (e.g. portable ladders or trestles) be safely handled by one person?
- Are the welfare facilities adequate?

For example, there should be adequate heating and access to drinking water and toilets outside normal hours

Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?

Consider whether the work involves lifting objects too large or heavy for one person or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment. It is generally unacceptable for people to work alone with powered workshop machinery because of the possibility of contact with dangerous parts.

Particularly careful consideration needs to be given to working alone with laboratory chemicals as the action in the event of an emergency may require the immediate assistance of a second person, for example if a chemical is splashed in the eye. In no circumstances should lone workers carry out techniques that are new or unfamiliar to them.

Tools and equipment

Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

Medical fitness should not be a significant factor when considering typical home visit conducted within normal hours. However, in other situations, it may be necessary to check that lone workers have no medical conditions, which make them unsuitable for working alone. Both routine work and foreseeable emergencies may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

Issues that must be discussed in relation to medical fitness include:

- Do the circumstances of working alone place additional requirements on workers in terms of their physical or mental stamina?
- Is there a medical condition that makes them unsuitable for working alone?
- Would a pre-employment questionnaire or medical examination be helpful under the circumstances?

When medical advice is necessary, the Occupational Health Service should be consulted.

What happens if a person becomes ill has an accident, or there is an emergency?

The assessment should take account of the fact that a lone worker is more vulnerable when the unexpected happens. In case of emergency, consideration must be given to:

- Whether sufficient preparation has been made to cope with the emergency, e.g. fire, illness or accident, and have appropriate procedures been established?

Solitary workers should:

Be capable of responding correctly in emergency situations. Emergency procedures should be established and workers trained to implement them. Information about emergency procedures should be given to solitary contract workers who visit the premises.

Have access to adequate first-aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. Suitable systems should be devised to monitor the condition of solitary workers, and include at least a check at the end of the working period.

In addition, it is desirable to consider:

- Procedures where supervisors contact periodically visit and visually monitor people working alone.
- Procedures where regular contact between the solitary worker and supervision is maintained using either a telephone or radio.
- Automatic warning devices, which operate if specific signals are not received periodically from the solitary worker, e.g. systems to include security staff.
- Other devices to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency operated manually or activated automatically by the absence of activity.

Control Measures

Identify existing control methods, assess their effectiveness and specify any additional controls that may be necessary.

Consider alternative work methods, training, supervision, protective equipment /devices, etc.

Some measures to consider may include:

- Specific information, instruction and training (e.g. emergency procedures, out-of-hours procedures, personal safety training, etc.).
- Increased communication systems/procedures (e.g. regular prearranged contact by mobile phone, etc.).
- Increased supervision.
- Increased security (e.g. CCTV, secure access, personal alarms).
- Increased lighting at entrances, exits, car parks.

Mobile Telephones, Lone Worker Devices and Personal Attack Alarms

The issue of mobile telephones, Lone worker devices and personal attack alarms as control measures, may actually increase the overall risk and their issue should be given careful thought.

The observed use of a mobile telephone may identify a member of staff as a target for street crime. The theft, often with violence, of mobile telephones has increased dramatically in the last 2 years. Personal attack alarms are often advocated as a precautionary measure, particularly with lone workers. Their use, however, could escalate a situation from verbal abuse to physical assault.

If it is decided that the benefits outweigh the risks, these items of equipment should be available for use, but this will affect the training needs assessment for lone workers. Training in the safe use of mobile telephones, Lone Worker Devices and personal attack alarms will be necessary so that their use will not increase overall risks.

Practical suggestions on the use of a mobile phone

Lone workers will inevitably carry mobile phones and they should always check the signal strength before entering a lone working situation. A mobile phone should never be relied on as the only means of communication. Lone workers should tell their manager or a colleague about any visit in advance, including its location and nature, and when they expect to arrive and leave. Afterwards, they should let their manager or colleague know that they are safe. If provided, a mobile phone should always be kept as fully charged as possible and the lone worker should ensure they can use the mobile phone properly, by familiarising themselves with the handset and instruction manual. Emergency contacts should be kept on speed dial and the phone should be kept nearby and never left unattended.

- Monitoring and auditing to ensure that the system works as intended.

Persons at Risk

Identify all those who may be at risk. It is important that these individuals are made aware of the outcome of the risk assessment and informed of all necessary control measures.

Information and Training

Identify the level and extent of training required, taking into account the nature of the lone working activity. Consider the knowledge and experience of individuals, particularly young and new workers. Lone workers should be given information to deal with normal everyday situations but should also understand when and where to seek guidance or assistance from others, i.e. unusual or threatening situations, etc. Supervision

Supervision complements information, instruction and training and helps to ensure that all staff understands the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. It can also provide guidance in situations of uncertainty.

The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the proficiency and experience of the employee to identify and handle safety issues. Employees who are new to the job, undergoing training, doing a job which presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied at first.

The extent of supervision required is a management decision. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they require assistance. Safety supervision can generally be carried out when visits are made to check the progress and quality of the work and may take the form of periodic site visits coupled with discussions in which safety issues are assessed.

Therefore given the relative lack of supervision, extra care must be taken to ensure that the lone worker is competent to both carry out the task and to deal with foreseeable problems.

Additional Information

Identify any additional information relevant to the lone worker, including emergency procedures, out-of-hours contact details, first aid provisions, etc.

Record the findings of the assessment

A generic assessment is most usefully recorded as part of the arrangements in the Directorate/Departmental Safety Policy. Specific assessments need to be recorded individually. The aim should be to record the findings in a way that provides a useful working document for supervisors and staff. They will then understand the action they need to take and will find it easier to decide when the assessment needs to be reviewed or where further preventative measures are necessary. All records of risk assessments should include information on:

- The hazards identified.
- The safe working arrangements that are necessary, including physical controls, training, supervision and monitoring/contact arrangements.
- The contingency plan, should the monitoring/contact arrangements fail to operate.
- The limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone.
- In the case of work outside normal hours, the definition of the term "normal hours".
- In the case of individual assessments, the date of the assessment and the latest date for review.

Implement the safe working arrangements

The risk assessment will have identified the physical controls, systems of work, training and supervision necessary to ensure the safety of the lone worker. If not all of these arrangements are already in place, they will need to be implemented in a structured way before the lone working can be permitted to commence. A home visit checklist must be completed pre visit .

Monitor and review the safe working arrangements

Once the safe working arrangements have been implemented they need to be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure they remain effective. Monitoring the way in which people are working is a routine day-to-day management function. More formal monitoring of the arrangements should also take place during departmental safety inspections. Lone workers must be actively encouraged to report any incidents which could affect their safety to allow a proper review of the adequacy of the working arrangements. **All risk assessments should be reviewed at regular intervals, at least once a year, or whenever there is any reason to believe that the existing assessment is no longer valid. A record should be made of every review carried out.**



Home visit Checklist

Child's name:	
Address:	Next of Kin (name & contact details)
Postcode:	
Telephone number:	Telephone number:
Concern	Comments
Students/carers behaviour Previous history of violent behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, behavioural issues	
Students medical concerns/ infection control	
Environment Lighting/heating, egress- way out, pets, general state of repair- flooring, obstacles	
Equipment Hoists/chair lifts Oxygen cylinders	
Geographical area High rise flat Poor parking area Poor lighting Delay in entry to property	
Communication Unable to gain mobile phone signal	
Other	

Agreed Home Visit Arrangements. Example: take escort, avoid end of day visits, inform work-based contact of whereabouts prior to visit, utilise security.

Signature	
Job role	
Date	

Home Visit Buddy Sheet

1	Name	
2	Date	
3	Address of visit	
4	Workers contact number	
	Telephone number of address	
5	Statement from worker if help Required	Can you cancel my appointment with Miss Honey her number is in reception?
6	Name of Buddy	
7	Visit time Arrive	
8	Estimated time of end of visit	

Process

- Worker completes 1 to 6 before leaving
- Worker telephones Buddy on arrival to provide estimated time of end of visit
- Buddy completes 7 and 8 following call
- If no call is received from worker 20 minutes after estimated time of end of visit, Buddy telephones worker on mobile and /or address number
- If no reply after a further 10 minutes Buddy attempt to call again
- If no answer call for assistance, i.e. police