

## Lone Working: Employee Factsheet

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, and they can be found in many working environments.

Examples of lone working include:

- People working alone in premises, such as shops or kiosks
- Home workers
- People working outside of normal working hours, such as cleaners, security staff, maintenance or repair staff
- Those who work separately from others, such as research staff, or those in leisure centres, warehouses etc.
- Agricultural and forestry workers
- Service workers, such as postal staff, social workers, doctors and nurses, drivers, estate agents, etc.
- Those involved in trades such as electrical repairs, plumbing, lift repairs, painting and decorating etc.

Hazards associated with lone working:

- Violence and abuse
- Injuries from animals
- Accidents where the consequences are worse if there is no immediate assistance or rescue
- Accidents that result from lone working, such as lifting something, or someone, alone
- Long term health issues resulting due to isolation, lack of supervision, knowledge or training.

Your employer will undertake a risk assessment to make sure the risks are adequately controlled. The assessment will cover the following areas:

- Whether there is safe access and egress
- Whether you can handle any necessary temporary access equipment, such as portable ladders
- If you can handle all the necessary machinery and goods alone
- If any chemicals or hazardous substances used could pose a health or safety risk
- If your work involves lifting objects that are too large for lone lifting
- If there is a risk of violence
- Whether young, pregnant or disabled workers particularly are at risk if they work alone
- If your first language is not English, whether suitable arrangements are in place to ensure clear communication, especially in an emergency
- If you have any medical conditions that make lone working unsuitable
- What would happen if you became ill, had an accident or there was an emergency including first aid arrangements
- If the type of work should not be undertaken alone for example confined space entry
- Whether additional safeguards such as lone working alarm and communication system is needed.

In many lone working situations it is vital to be in constant, direct contact with the main office. If such cases, you should follow your organisation's procedures which may require you to:

- Prepare a daily work plan so that you and others know where you are expected to be and when
- Wear or use a lone working alarm or monitoring device
- Designate a contact person at base, plus a backup person
- Define under what circumstances you will check in and how often
- Keep your designated contact informed of your location and stick to your schedule
- Have your designated contact call you periodically to ensure you are ok
- Develop procedures to be followed if you do not check in as planned
- Avoid certain types of work.

### Did you know?

- Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees.
- Exposure to violence at work not only depends on a person's occupation but upon the circumstances and situations under which they perform their job. Working alone, increases the vulnerability of workers.

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