

## LONE WORKING

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision or without the interaction of other workers. They are found in a wide range of situations and examples include persons in fixed establishments where:

- Only one person works on the premises e.g. in small workshops or offices, porters in residential apartment blocks, security personnel, shop-workers.
- People work separately from others e.g. in warehouses, leisure centre, building maintenance workers, grounds maintenance personnel.
- People work outside normal working hours e.g. night security guards, night porters in residential apartments, office cleaning staff, maintenance staff, and shift workers.

Also included are mobile workers who work away from their fixed base, undertaking work such as:

- Work on construction, plant installation, maintenance and cleaning work, electrical installation and repair work, lift repairs, painting and decorating.
- Agricultural, horticultural and forestry work.
- Service workers, housing officers, social workers, district nurses, drivers, engineers, architects, surveyors.
- Sales reps and other professionals visiting clients or visiting domestic and commercial properties.

There is no legal prohibition on working alone. However, the broad duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 still apply. Employers have legal duties to identify hazards in the workplace, assess the risks involved and put in place effective measures to avoid or control the risk. Where there are five or more employees the assessment is to be recorded.

Should the risk assessment show that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help, backup or other means of accomplishing the task should be put in place.

Certain high-risk activities require a second person to be present, this requirement will be identified in the task risk assessment. Activities would typically include high risk confined space working, electrical work near exposed live conductors, certain roof work, work at height, tree surgery, work on or near water etc.

Where the “lone worker” is working at another employer’ workplace, that employer should inform the lone worker’ employer of any risks in the workplace and the control measures that should be taken to minimise those risks, thus enabling the lone worker employer to carry out his own risk assessment.

## **2.0 SAFE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Work on the premises or on established managed sites.

Where employees are required to work alone within the premises or on Poole Housing Partnership Limited managed sites / locations, arrangements will be made for a risk assessment to be carried out to identify hazards in the particular workplace also to identify any hazards associated with the work task being carried out by the lone worker.

An assessment of risk will be made and controls put in place to eliminate, or minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

Where the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help, backup or other means of accomplishing the task are to be put in place.

The lone worker will be informed of the findings of the assessment and any actions to be taken.

Generic risk assessments will be established for a range of tasks each of a similar nature but carried out at a number of different locations. These assessments will generally be based on established documented safe working procedures.

## **3.0 GENERAL**

Staff visiting business clients or client's property:

- Ensure your appointments / whereabouts are known and are recorded before leaving the office by keeping schedules/diaries up-to-date, using wipe boards, transmitting e-mails etc.
- Check records to ascertain the type of client you are about to visit and decide what, if any, safety precautions may be required.
- Always carry necessary vehicle recovery documentation also a means of identification for production if needed.
- Carry a mobile phone, ensuring it is fully functional and batteries charged before departure.
- Carry a torch. Carry a personal attack alarm if considered necessary.
- Details of your vehicle should be available within Poole Housing Partnership Limited (it may be required by the police).
- If for any reason you are to be delayed, inform your Line Manager. Always inform your Line Manager / colleague of your return, or if going directly home, phone to confirm all is well.
- If any employee fails to return to the office or their home the person monitoring the trip must communicate the failure to management who will conduct appropriate action in accordance with established 'Lost Contact' procedure.

## **4.0 DRIVING**

- If driving, ensure your vehicle is road-worthy, regularly serviced and complies with current road legislation, i.e. taxed, insured, MOT.
- A portable first aid container is to be carried in vehicles used for business purposes.
- Do not use hands free mobile phones whilst driving, always use the answer-phone facility where available. Only make calls when the vehicle is stopped and parked in such a manner so as not to cause problems for other road users.

## **5.0 VISITS TO PROPERTIES**

- When arriving at the location try to park the vehicle as close to the property as possible, if after dark, park preferably in a well-lit area. Reverse the vehicle in to enable a fast departure to be made if needed. In darkness use a torch where appropriate to get to your final destination.
- After leaving the appointment at the property, quickly check your vehicle before entering. If dark use a torch to ensure that an intruder does not occupy it.
- If visiting an empty property (where there has been unauthorised access, client problems or any doubt about security / safety) – two persons must be present and communication made with the office before entering, communication is to be maintained until proven safe (i.e. quick inspection to ensure the property is unoccupied).
- If on arrival at site there are concerns about the visit, the employee should use his / her discretion and terminate the visit until a more appropriate course of action can be taken.

## **6.0 LOST CONTACT**

- If a visiting employee fails to make contact with the office when agreed and expected, Management should endeavour to re-establish contact as soon as possible.
- The acceptable period of delay before due concern is shown and further enquiries are made will depend on factors including, the person concerned, the nature of the visit or trip, the location, road traffic and weather conditions on the route.

The following information may be required by the police in the event of a serious problem and should be readily available when required:

- Name, address and telephone number of the employee.
- The registration number, make, model and colour of their vehicle.
- The route the employee was travelling, if known.
- The address of the business or property location visited.

Some areas have poor reception and mobile phones may not be useable, in these circumstances a public phone box can be used or drive to an area of improved reception.

## **7.0 GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH POTENTIALLY AGGRESSIVE SITUATIONS**

See 'Violence at Work' within this document.