

Legal Stuff

There is no general legal requirement saying that an employee should not work alone.

There are though some working situations where it is considered too dangerous or difficult for individuals to work unaccompanied. In these cases, for example work where work involves fumigation, transport of explosives, certain live electrical work and working in confined spaces special arrangements are required.

We are responsible for your health, safety **and welfare** whilst you are at work, wherever you are working. Provided we make an assessment of risks involved when you are lone working and take sensible steps, which are reasonably practicable, to control any identified risks there is nothing to prevent you working alone.

Information

Anyone who works by themselves without direct contact or supervision and where there are no other workers present for any period of time will be a lone worker. Lone workers could be a sales rep, a mobile maintenance engineer, long distance lorry driver, night security warden, travelling midwife and even a milkman on his round. It includes a person working at home or unsociable hours.

You can be a lone worker while working on a large site with hundreds of employed people. A boilerman working alone in a boiler house or a maintenance engineer working on a site based effluent treatment plant would be lone workers. Their work takes them to remote or unattended work areas where, although hazards and risks may normally be controlled, should anything go wrong they are on their own and may be unable to call for help.

Lone workers can also be at risk while travelling; for example, from adverse weather conditions, icy roads, and the lack of suitable welfare or rest facilities.

The risk of violence is an ever present risk to lone workers going to unfamiliar areas or while working at night; examples would include people making deliveries, visiting a client, leaving premises after cleaning them or opening and closing a shop early in the morning and late at night.

Control measures – avoiding the risk

There are a range of controls that can be used by employers and workers to reduce risks to lone workers;

- ✓ Use a buddy system, work in pairs.
- ✓ Carry a mobile phone with an ICE number or walkie-talkie; check reception first.
- ✓ Carry an alarm or lone worker monitoring device; make sure it works before you rely on it.
- ✗ Do not carry valuables.
- ✓ Make regular contact with a nominated person in the office and check in at the end of the day.
- ✓ Park in well-lit places.
- ✓ Tell someone if you alter your plans.
- ✗ Do not meet people you don't know in remote places; choose a public place.
- ✓ Be familiar with health and safety procedures.
- ✓ Tell your employer if your medical history and or level of fitness make it inappropriate for you to work alone.
- ✓ Know what to do in an emergency, when you feel threatened or in danger.
- ✓ Wear Personal Protective Equipment if required.
- ✓ Report problems and incidents that occur while you're working alone

For your protection

For some lone workers the risks are low and no special measures are required; e.g. people with cleaning duties working as part of a team, or an individual staffing an out of hours phone line or monitoring a CCTV system.

We have assessed the risks to people who work alone and where we have identified that they are at risk we have introduced specific measures which have been explained to them. However you know exactly where you have to go, what you have to do and the tasks and places that are of greatest concern. If you have any concerns that you still face unacceptable risks you must raise them with your manager.

Do you know if you are a lone worker? If you don't know for sure and think you might be, speak with your line manager

You must

(Introduce and explain the detail of your own rules and procedures at this stage so that your employees are aware of them and understand their duties. Don't forget to include the staff who take calls from lone workers during the course of the day; they must know what to do, how to record contacts and the procedure to be followed when an expected contact is not received. Make sure you include the following points)

- ✓ Follow the lone working procedures explained to you by your supervisors and managers at all times.
- ✓ Comply with our monitoring procedures when you are working alone off-site - we need to know that you are safe.
- ✗ **Not** take risks, set yourself a reasonable time-frame and target to work towards.
- ✓ Contact your supervisor or manager if you feel unwell, in danger, have a problem or face an unexpected situation.
- ✓ Take breaks, especially if you feel tired; go for a short walk to get fresh air or stop for food and drink.
- ✓ Report accidents and incidents where you have felt under threat to your manager. If we are unaware of problems we can't make adjustments to our procedures.

Remember: If you do not feel safe working alone, then speak to your supervisor or safety representative. Always notify your friends or family if you are working alone of your location and working hours.