

LONE WORKING PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure systems are devised and implemented to support the commitment made by the University to protect employees who are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks associated with working alone, and to meet the requirements of legislation.

This procedure aims to ensure systems are implemented to protect employees who are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks associated with working alone.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Section 2, outlines employers' responsibilities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees whilst at work. Although there is no specific legislation in respect of working alone, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 3, states that every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the 'foreseeable' risks that employees might face in the course of their duties. Following risk assessment, control measures must be put in place to manage those risks.

A risk assessment is essential to good risk management, insuring safe working arrangements are in place and recorded for all persons considered to be lone workers.

Special attention is required when assessing lone working as the risks inherent in such work are exacerbated by the lack of normal channels of support. Training is particularly important as there will be no direct supervision of work. Monitoring procedures also need to be established to ensure that lone workers are following safe systems of work.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Deans of Schools / Directors / Heads of Department

Responsible for all health and safety within their School or Department and therefore must:

- Allocate sufficient staff resources to avoid lone working where reasonably practicable
- Ensure risk assessments are completed, including for lone working
- Allocate sufficient resources for all control measures required by the risk assessment
- Comply with the Estates department Access Request Form

Supervisors, Line Managers, Directors of Studies and Academic Leads

Responsible for ensuring the day to day supervision of health and safety matters in their areas of responsibility and therefore must:

- Identify safer alternatives to lone working where reasonably practicable
- Carry out, or ensuring the carrying out, and monitor/review all applicable risk assessments, including for lone working
- Communicate the risk assessment to all affected parties
- Bring this procedure to the attention of direct reports undertaking lone working
- Check that the relevant paperwork, such as Access Requests and /or Risk Assessment is completed by those undertaking lone working

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champion

Act as the focal point for health, safety and wellbeing within their school or department and as such must:

- Bring any concerns reported to them, and related to lone working, to the attention of the school or department Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee as appropriate. Any urgent concerns should be raised with the Dean of School / Head of Department immediately.

Individual Users

(Staff and Students) have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others, and therefore must:

- Take care of themselves and others who could be affected by their actions and omissions
- Adhere to the control measures identified in the Lone Working Risk Assessment
- Report any significant safety issues to their Line Manager promptly

Supervising Officers engaging contractors must ensure that if the contractor is intending to conduct lone working, that this is recorded on the Notification to Work and that suitable control measures are in place.

PROCEDURE

Definition of Lone Working

Lone working is work which is specifically intended to be carried out unaccompanied and without close or direct supervision.

Lone working can occur:

- During normal working hours
- When working outside normal working hours

- At a remote location

Working alone is specifically prohibited by law in a small number of situations, such as working with live electrical conductors and within confined spaces. Within the University, lone working should be risk assessed using the principles outlined below and eliminated or reduced if possible when reasonably practicable.

Lone Working Risk Assessment

The risks associated with lone working should be assessed and wherever possible lone working eliminated where reasonably practicable. This is particularly true of all high risk activities, such as those taking place in engineering workshops involving dangerous parts of machinery or within science labs whilst undertaking high risk experiments.

Sensible and proportionate risk control measures must be considered, including organisational, physical and behavioural controls, safe systems of work, training and supervision. These arrangements must be in place before lone working can commence. Significant findings must be recorded in the risk assessment template, as per the Procedure for Carrying out a Risk Assessment.

Lone workers should not be placed at more risk than other employees and extra 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 particular risk to the lone worker?
- Is there safe access and egress?
- Can one person safely handle all plant, substances and goods involved in the work?
- Is there a risk of violence?

Office Work

Staff working alone within a Department outside office hours should:

- Complete the Estates Department form 'Access Request Form' obtainable from the Estates intranet pages.
- Secure windows and doors to prevent unauthorised access, so that the working environment is as safe as possible;
- On leaving the Department, ensure that all windows are closed and doors locked;
- If an incident occurs report the circumstances, no matter how minor to your manager as soon as practicable after the event;
- At the end of work, inform UWS Security that you are leaving the premises as agreed in the above mentioned form.

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. Lone workers must be actively encouraged to report any incidents via the Awaken Incident Reporting System, in order to allow a proper review of the adequacy of the working arrangements.

Access Requests

The University buildings are locked down in the evenings and, as such, any access planned to take place out with normal hours must be done so in accordance with the Access Request Form. An Access Request Form must be completed by all relevant parties and submitted to the Estates department 48 hours in advance. All individuals working out of hours must sign-out as they leave the campus. Security will sweep each building prior to locking the premises in order to check that all persons have exited.

Staff who are key holders and may be expected to respond to an unplanned event out of hours must sign-in and out at Security. If it is reasonably foreseeable that staff may respond to calls out of hours then this should be risk assessed as per above.

Staff who are contracted to work out with normal hours, e.g. domestic services staff, Security and Library staff do not have to complete an Access Request Form.

Home Workers

Any member of staff working from home will most likely meet the definition provided above and, as such, will be deemed a lone worker. For most, this may involve only low risk computer based tasks and, therefore, the risk assessment should reflect this. Employers have little direct control over the home workspace and, as such, the home worker should complete the assessment. Line Managers should support this process where any difficulties arise and should review to determine that the assessment is suitable and sufficient. Particular consideration for home working may include: use of equipment, display screen, electrical safety, fire safety, risk to others in the home and wellbeing. All DSE Users must complete the Display Screen Equipment module on Awaken. This will provide the user with the competency to set up their workstation, whether in the workplace or at home.

Lone Worker Alarms

The use of static or personal alarms are often used as a lone worker control measure, particularly where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of violence. If the use of such technology is identified as a control measure then advice should be sought from the Resilience and Safety Team. It is essential that the user receives full instruction on how to operate the alarm and that it is subject to regular maintenance, that the University Security team have details of the device location and the action to take upon activation.

Procedure Author – Head of Resilience and Safety	Procedure Owner – University Secretary
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