

Dawlish Town Council

Lone worker policy

1. Statement of Policy

Many of the Council employees are expected to work alone from time to time and for some staff lone working is the norm. Working alone is not necessarily unsafe but there are circumstances where lone working can increase the risks. An example where risk is increased would be electrical maintenance where in the event of electrocution the lone worker would not be able to call for assistance. Another example would be an officer of the Council visiting someone's home when that person was known to have a history of violence. Clearly lone working may increase the risk of violent attack in this latter example.

There are no specific regulations regarding lone working, although the general provisions of Section 2(1) do apply and the risk assessment required under regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 would need to include a consideration of any extra risks to lone workers. The Health and safety Executive have produced guidance for employers on ensuring safety for lone workers.

The Council recognises that there may be increased risks to staff who are required to work alone. The implementation of this policy, and also departmental policies and procedures, should help to reduce these risks. Please note the subject of violence and violent incidents is dealt with in a separate policy.

2. Organisation and Arrangements

2.1 Town Clerk

The Town Clerk has a key role to play in ensuring that risks to lone workers are minimised.

- ensure that the additional risks to lone workers are taken into account in risk assessments for their department;
- if appropriate (see risk assessment), develop departmental procedures for minimising risk for lone workers;
- in situations where out-of-hours lone working is expected, Town Clerk will arrange for a procedure to be developed which gives detailed instructions of the actions they should take when dealing with out-of-hours lone workers from this authority
- ensure that a log is kept of persons known to be working alone in circumstances where they face increased risks. This may take the form of a book, board or other suitable means of recording information. The information to be recorded might include name, working location or destination, contact phone number (or mobile number), time of departure, expected time of return. Details should also be kept of any special instructions such as any checks to be made on the lone worker (e.g. by phoning them) or frequency of call-ins to be made by the lone worker to base;
- nominate a further member of staff at the doffice to co-ordinate lone worker information and monitor the log to ensure that appropriate action is taken if someone does not return at the time expected;
- in the event of being notified that a lone worker is overdue, will take reasonable steps to determine the reason. Steps may include sending other staff to investigate, contacting the missing persons home number (but do not alarm relatives!) or notifying the police, as appropriate;
- ensure staff are aware of the existence of the scheme for recording, reporting and sharing information on “Potentially Hazardous Visits” and ensure that the shared information is made available to lone workers;

2.2 The departmental lone worker co-ordinator

N.B. not all departments will find it necessary to nominate a lone worker co-ordinator. Where they are nominated then responsibilities should be agreed within the department and recorded in departmental policies and procedures. In general responsibilities should be similar to those given below.

Lone worker co-ordinators :-

- will be responsible for checking the lone worker log during the day and at the end of the day to ensure that lone workers are accounted for;
- will make contact with lone workers if such contact has been prearranged;
- will attempt to make contact with any lone worker who is more than 30 minutes overdue (past their expected return time);
- where a lone worker fails to make a scheduled call-in or is more than 30 minutes overdue the lone worker co-ordinator will notify the Head of Department who may wish to send other staff to investigate, contact the missing persons home number (but do not alarm relatives!) or notify the police as appropriate;
- will check the log 30 minutes before the end of the day to ensure that all lone workers are accounted for;
- will notify Teigncare of any lone workers details where the work will extend out of normal hours.

2.3 Lone workers

Department policies and procedures should be consulted for detailed information, but general responsibilities will be as follows.

Lone workers :-

- will record details of their lone working spells in the departmental log;
- will telephone the office at prearranged times (if any) and if they expect to exceed their expected time of return (recorded in departmental log);
- will ensure that they carry any mobile telephone supplied departmentally for use by lone workers (if available);

- will ensure that they carry any personal alarm supplied departmentally for use by lone workers;
- will take reasonable care not to put themselves at undue risk. Where employees feel that they would be at particular risk unless additional precautions are taken then they should discuss this with their line manager. See also lone worker guidance given in appendix 1;
- will, if appropriate, complete a “Potentially Hazardous Visit” report and/or a “Violent / Aggressive Incidents” report form. See policy on violence and violent incidents for more details;
- in the event of an accident, will complete an accident report form. See policy on accident, incident and hazard reporting for more details;
- for out of hours lone working, will notify Teigncare of the lone working situation. Information on employees name, the location of the work, a contact telephone number, time of starting work and expected time of finishing work, vehicle details (make, colour, registration number).

2.4 Health Safety and Welfare Officer

- will receive reports on “Potentially Hazardous Visits” and circulate them as appropriate;
- will receive and process accident reports and reports on “Violent / Aggressive Incidents”. See separate policies for details.

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APPENDIX 1

Guidelines for lone workers

A. Plan your visit

- Where there is a choice, try to meet clients in the office rather than visit them on your own.
- Decide if a home or site visit is really necessary? Is there another way?
- Your department may keep a list of people and premises where problems have occurred or may be expected. Unless your client is known to you, consult this list before visiting them.
- Make sure that you use any departmental log system that is in operation.
- Take a mobile phone and a personal attack alarm with you if these are available.
- If you have serious concerns about your safety on any particular spell of lone working then discuss these with your line manager. It may be possible for you to be accompanied by a colleague or in certain cases a police officer.

B. Making the visit

- When visiting commercial premises always make your presence known at the earliest opportunity by reporting to reception or the site supervisor.
- Identify yourself clearly. Make sure you carry your identity card and show it. Business cards can be helpful when making introductions.
- Comply with any booking in and out procedures that operate on the site or premises and always obey any safety rules (e.g. hard hat on construction sites).
- Try to avoid entering unattended sites or premises.
- Try to avoid confrontation. If a situation does become heated try to stay calm. If violence is threatened it is best to withdraw. It may be possible to arrange to re-visit the site or premises with colleagues or in certain

cases with a police officer.

C. On return to the office

- Ensure your return is noted in the lone workers log.
- If appropriate complete a “Potentially Hazardous Visit” Report.
- If you have been threatened or attacked, complete a “Violent / Aggressive Incidents” report form. See policy on violence and violent incidents for more details.

D. Mobile phones

- In the event that an officer suspects that a violent attack is imminent it may be possible to use a mobile telephone to summon assistance (e.g. 999 for the police). Heated arguments can suddenly escalate to the point at which violence is used and in practice there may be little time to call for help.
- Mobile phones may be useful for contacting the office, either because you arranged to do so as part of the logging procedure or to notify the lone worker co-ordinator of difficulties with the visit or a late return.

E. Personal attack alarms

- Officers who find themselves in a violent situation may activate their personal alarms. It may be that activation of an alarm is enough to bring an attacker to their senses and persuade them to break off the attack.
- Note, personal attack alarms are not weapons and should be used only to startle an attacker and alert passers-by. Aggressive use of such alarms may actually inflame a situation.
- Personal attack alarms are not toys! They can emit a piercing noise and could damage hearing if held close to someone’s ear. Do not use them for practical jokes!

F. Training

- Ensure that you are properly trained and have the skills and knowledge to do your job safely and without risks to health. If you feel that you need extra training then discuss this with your line manager.

- Health and safety training is arranged for your benefit. Attend it!
Particularly helpful may be the courses held from time to time on dealing with difficult people.