T H E   M O R A Y   C O U N C I L
Safety Management System

Section: 5.7
Title: **LONE WORKING**
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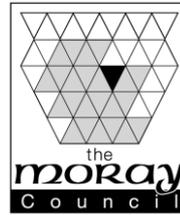
1.   INTRODUCTION

Lone workers are defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as, "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". Typical lone workers within Moray Council include:

- single occupants of premises, such as someone in sole charge of an office or facility in a remote location;
- employees operating, alone, away from base, such as maintenance staff, housing officers, environmental health officers, social workers, home carers, drivers etc;
- out of hours workers, such as home carers, social workers, cleaners, etc.
- employees working from home

It is important to remember that many members of staff can be considered to be lone workers for short periods of time, especially at the beginning and end of the working day and during lunch periods.

2.   PURPOSE

This document is intended to detail the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff in controlling and minimising the risks to staff from hazards associated with lone working.

3.   SCOPE

All employees of Moray Council, regardless of position or grade, are covered by the requirements of this document. In addition all agency, contract, volunteers and those working on placement are expected to adhere to them.

4.   RESPONSIBILITIES, additional to those detailed in Sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 of the Moray Council's Safety Management System.

Managers

- identifying all lone workers for whom they have responsibility;
- ensuring procedures, safe systems of work and risk assessments relating to lone working are in place, regularly reviewed, include responsibilities for safeguarding and that all employees are aware of these
- ensuring that all employees who may undertake lone working receive adequate training, information, instruction, supervision and support;
- ensuring that local procedures are developed and effectively employed to reduce the risks associated with lone working as far as reasonably practicable and in particular, address contact / communication issues and emergency

response.

- ensuring that employees receive suitable and effective support following any hazardous incident at work.

Central Health and Safety Team

- review incident and investigation reports, highlighting any trends or concerns to the appropriate senior management;
- audit health and safety systems, to ensure that these are performing to a suitable standard;
- ensure that this document is reviewed at regular intervals.

Employees

- taking reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions;
- follow procedures/safe systems of work that are in place to minimise risk related to lone working
- Report all adverse events including near misses that arise whilst working alone
- attending any appropriate training and instruction sessions;
- ensuring that relevant practical skills are regularly refreshed;

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1. Lone workers should not be placed at any more risk than other employees, but will still face the usual hazards encountered at work. Risk assessments should be used to identify whether the work can be carried out safely by a lone worker and those areas where lone working magnifies the risks presented by the hazards. It must also identify those control measures that should be employed to ensure the employees' health and safety.

5.2. Risk assessments are only to be undertaken by competent persons, who have knowledge of the tasks and associated hazards that are being assessed or who have the assistance of persons with this knowledge. These must be completed prior the commencement of the task or service provision.

5.3. Whilst generic lone working risk assessments may be used as a model, it is important that each lone working situation is the subject of a specific risk assessment. (see Annex A)

6. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

6.1 It is essential that lone workers are not put at increased risk of harm in the event of an emergency. All departments with employees who may be required to work on alone must have robust systems in place to deal with foreseeable emergencies and their aftermath.

6.2 Such emergencies may include:

a. Fire;
b. Explosion;
c. Violent attack (physical or verbal);
d. Gas leak;

e. Electrocution;
f. Sudden ill health;
g. Asphyxia;
h. Flood;
i. Structural collapse;
j. Road traffic accident.

6.3 Some emergencies are much more likely to occur than others, but generic systems must where possible cover all eventualities. Systems must be in place to quickly get adequate assistance to a lone worker who becomes involved in such events.

6.4 Out of hours emergencies must be considered, many Moray Council lone workers are routinely employed in the evenings and at weekends.

7. INFORMATION SHARING

7.1 The risk to lone workers when visiting service users can be reduced, provided there is an awareness of any previous violent behaviour, from that particular person towards other council officers. Such information must be based on fact and not hearsay.

7.2 Information on potentially violent service users maybe available from other Council Departments and Services and from other agencies that have had dealings with the individual previously. When the responsibility for such an individual is transferred between Services or agencies, this information must be made available to ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment can be carried out. Examples of the transfer of responsibility are:

a. A young person moving from foster care to adult services;
b. A pupil moving from one school to another within the authority;
c. A person leaving hospital and becoming the recipient of home care;
d. An existing client of the Council, who takes the tenancy of Council accommodation.

7.3 Data Protection Legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), govern the way information is obtained, recorded, stored, used and destroyed It is recognised that violent behaviour warning markers are a valuable means to identifying and recording the details of individuals who pose, or could pose, a risk to members of staff who come into contact with those individuals. However, such markers are required to be used very carefully and should contain the reasons for identifying individuals as being potentially violent. It is important to bear in mind that individuals can request any information that is held by the Council, under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI).

7.4 Please refer to (link to be added when guidance developed) for specific guidance on the use of warning markers in the Council.

8. TRAINING

8.1 Adequate training for lone workers is an important part of ensuring their continued well-being. Such training may include:

a. Safe systems of work for lone workers;
b. Emergency procedures;
c. Basic 1st aid
d. Health and Wellbeing Support Techniques for dealing with difficult, distressed or disturbed persons;
e. Techniques for diffusing difficult situations;
f. Dealing with complaints;
g. What can and cannot be undertaken when working alone;
h. Use of technology including online meetings
i. Use of communications equipment;
j. Use of personal alarms.

8.2 Specific training should be given to managers and supervisors, who have responsibility for lone workers. This should cover:

a. How to provide support to lone workers;
b. How to supervise remotely;
c. The maintenance of effective early warning systems and implementing protocols and procedures for preventing and monitoring risks associated with work-related violence.
d. How to provide effective back-up in the event of an alarm call or request for help;
e. Accident and incident reporting and investigation.

9.   ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

9.1 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
9.2 MC, Safety Management System, section 7.3, Work-Related Violence
9.3 MC, Dealing with Violence and Aggression at Work, A Guide
9.4 Homeworking Guidance/Checklists
9.5 DSE Guidance

10. ANNEXES

A. Risk Assessment Requirements
B. Lone Worker 1st Aid Kit
C. Lone Working Safe Procedures Checklist
D. Monitoring/Reporting/Checking In Systems

11. FURTHER INFORMATION

Add in link to HSE resources

Risk Assessment Requirements

When carrying out risk assessments on tasks undertaken by lone workers, the following points should be considered:

1. Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker? Consideration should be given to; violence and aggression, travelling to and from appointments, visiting client's or service user's homes. Severe weather should also be taken into consideration.

2. Is there a safe way in and out for a lone person? Can any temporary access equipment which is necessary, such as portable ladders, be handled safely by one person? Emergencies such as fire, physical injury and sudden illness must be considered.

3. Can all equipment, substances and goods involved in the work be handled safely by one person? Consider whether the work involves hazardous manual handling, or whether more than one person is required to operate equipment.

4. Is there a risk of violence? This could be from a service user, their relations or associates. It may even be a random occurrence, not connected with the particular work activity.

5. Are young/inexperienced workers or new and expectant mothers especially at risk if they work alone? The advisability of allowing new starters, young persons and work placements to work on their own should be considered within all risk assessments. These cases must be very carefully considered, before allowing lone working. For new and expectant mothers, consideration may need to be given to a temporary adjustment to duties and responsibilities or, where this is not feasible, medical suspension on full pay.

6. Is the employee medically fit and suitable to work alone? (lone working may cause additional physical and/or mental burden on the individual). The general health of the lone worker must be considered. Night shift workers, must successfully complete a health assessment prior to undertaking night work.

7. Is any special or additional training required? This may be specific to procedures and hazards associated with lone working or linked to enhanced hazards created by carrying out normal activities alone.

8. Are task parameters clearly defined? All lone workers and their managers/supervisors must be clear about what the job entails. This should include what can be done as well as what cannot.

9. Are there suitable levels of supervision in place for lone workers? Consideration must be given to the amount and type of indirect and occasional direct supervision that should be employed.

10. Are there adequate means of communication in place? Consideration must be given to mobile phone coverage and other methods to keep in touch with lone workers.

11. Based on up to date risk assessment possible control measures that could be considered, include:

  a. Adequate training and instruction, including refreshers;
  b. Staff induction and supervision;
  c. Periodic site visits by managers and supervisors;
  d. Carrying and use of mobile phones / 2 way radio / personal alarms;
  e. Recording work plan details;
  f. Informing pre-arranged person of all itinerary changes;
  g. Systems for reporting/checking in before and after appointments or at pre-arranged periodicity;
  h. Use of telephone "buddy" systems or other systems using technology available;
  i. Systems for reporting concerns and getting assistance when staff have not reported/checked in;
  j. Clear instruction to abort visits if staff feel uneasy;
  k. Avoiding the carriage of valuables and large sums of money;
  l. Suitable first aid kit.

FIRST AID PROVISION FOR LONE WORKERS

Moray Council is responsible for meeting the first aid needs of its employees who are required to work alone. Risk assessments carried out for lone working should identify whether that employee requires a degree of emergency first aid training and what, if any, first aid equipment they should carry. Consideration should be given to:

- How often they are required to work alone?
- How remote are their working locations?
- How easily can assistance be summoned?
- Is the lone worker exposed to specific hazards? Such as:
  - Hazardous substances
  - Potentially aggressive clients
  - Hazardous equipment
  - Animals

Where it is considered to be desirable lone workers should carry a first aid kit that has a minimum contents of:

- A leaflet giving general guidance on first aid
- 6 sterile adhesive dressings
- 1 large sterile non-medicated dressing
- 2 triangular bandages
- 2 safety pins
- 1 pair of impervious disposable gloves
- 4 alcohol free moist wipes

It is essential that all accidents and incidents are reported promptly and that first aid kits are replenished after use.

LONE WORKING SAFE PROCEDURES CHECKLIST (to be completed by the lone worker)

Duties carried out by you may involve working alone and away from your usual work place. This can give rise to health and safety concerns, particularly when visiting an isolated location, an unoccupied building or a customer who may be aggressive.

Before commencing the lone working task some preparation is necessary. Below is a checklist, which has been designed to help ensure your health and safety. This may appear to be common sense but each check should be considered carefully before leaving to undertake your visit.

Checklist	Yes / No
Directions to site – do you know where you are going?	
Are weather conditions safe for intended journey and destination?	
Do you know the person / premises that you are visiting?	
Personal protective equipment – is your equipment suitable for intended tasks? *Hard hat; safety boots; safety clothing; personal alarm; 1st aid kit; etc.*	
Consider purpose of task – if a danger is known to exist, is it wise to go alone? *Special consideration must be given where the visit involves meeting a person who is known to be aggressive or a situation where discussion may become heated. A similar concern relates to visiting a dangerous building or a site. In these circumstances you should be accompanied where possible. Your line manager should also be made aware of your intended action.*	
Have you left a detailed itinerary including timings, with your manager/supervisor or other responsible person? Electronic diary; *In / out board*; *Phone in;* *Buddy system. Inform manager / supervisor of all changes of plan and / or timings.*	
Means of contact – Have you a mobile phone, is number known to others? *Your mobile must be switched on at all times that you are working alone, therefore it essential that the battery pack is kept fully charged. It may be appropriate to have it set to silent, with vibrate alert selected.*	

If there are any concerns for your safety, you must not enter any situation alone. Each situation must be risk assessed by you - if in doubt do not enter or proceed.

MONITORING/REPORTING/CHECKING IN SYSTEMS

All lone worker reporting and control systems are only of use if they are meticulously followed. It is essential that both managers and staff pass and record information.

If contact is lost with a member of staff a system must be in place to contact them and if required provide them with emergency assistance. Such losses of contact maybe due to mobile telephone signals being lost or batteries running low, which probably would not constitute an emergency. However, it may be caused by a violent attack or a road traffic accident, both of which might have dire consequences.

Technology advances mean there is a wide range of systems and devices available to monitor lone workers. **Checking In/Out System**This safe working system works well with office based staff undertaking their lone working during normal working hours but can also be used by employees working from home or from a location other than the office. This system should be used in conjunction with reporting in by telephone or email at pre-arranged times.   Like most systems it is highly dependant on both employees and their supervisor being meticulous in their use of the system.   The following key points must be observed to ensure that the system works well:

- A register should be developed, using the most appropriate method determined by reference to the ways of working within the team/service. This can be electronically, on a white board, paper based or on a computer. This register should show:

Name	Where Working	Contact details	Service User	Arrival Time	Expected Return Time	Last Contact	Next Contact Due	Comments

- The register must always be annotated whenever an employee is lone working.

- It must be updated regularly.

- When the working starts from home or finishes at home, they must phone in to allow the register to be updated or where an electronic system exists, check in/out using that method.

- The register must be checked at frequent intervals, at least once per hour, to ensure that lone workers have not missed their pre-arranged reporting slots.

Phoning In

Phone contact is an essential part of the previous system and where lone workers are not office based it is an essential way of keeping in touch and allowing managers and supervisors to be aware of an employees whereabouts and what service users they are visiting.

Phone based systems should be run in conjunction with a Checking In / Out System.

Lone Working Out of Hours

Many Moray Council employees are required to work alone outwith normal office hours, when the control is more difficult to achieve. Departments employing staff who are required to work alone outwith office hours, must put in place suitable reporting systems to ensure the health and safety of such workers. This may not be straight

forward, as the Moray Council has very limited 24/7 resourcing in fixed locations. The following system should be considered as the minimum acceptable:

- Managers who are responsible for staff who work alone, outwith normal office hours, should ensure that they have a copy of the duty rota(s) with a clear indication of when they should be expected home.

- If they are to be late home, the lone worker should inform their service's point of contact and inform them of the change.

- The point of contact will attempt to make contact with the worker via mobile phone or the relevant service-user's home telephone number.

- If contact cannot be made, they should contact the police and request assistance in tracking the worker.

Whenever possible out of hours reporting systems should not rely on members of the employee's family being responsible for monitoring their whereabouts. If this cannot be avoided the family must have appropriate information on what to do in the event of an emergency or potential emergency.

Deleted: <#>If they have not returned home within 30 minutes of their expected time of arrival and has not made contact/cannot be contacted, a member of their family must contact the lone worker's point of contact.¶
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