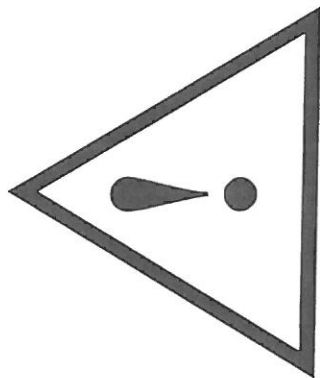


WORKING ALONE IN SAFETY



GUIDANCE FOR LONE WORKERS

11/06



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Working Alone in Safety

A lone worker is a person who generally works by himself or herself without close or direct supervision. A typical example would be a Sales Assistant or Site Operative working alone.

There is no legal requirement that prevents a person working alone. The various duties placed on employers and employees by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 will still apply. The principal requirement being to identify the hazards presented by the work, the risk involved and the introduction of remedial measures to avoid or reduce the risk.

Prior to arranging for a person to work alone a risk assessment should be undertaken which takes into account foreseeable emergencies such as fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. More specific situations to be considered include:

- Are lone workers at risk in the particular workplace?
- Is there safe access and egress to the workplace?
- Is temporary access equipment required and if so can it be safely handled by one person?, i.e. ladders, trestles;
- Are there manual handling problems for a person working alone?
- Is there a risk of violence?

Employers should check to ensure that the person required to work alone is fit and has no medical conditions that make them unsuitable for lone working. Furthermore the person should be suitably competent and experienced to deal with the foreseeable risk and the precautions required and in certain circumstances be able to know when to stop working and seek help. This may require additional training before the person is allowed to work alone. Strict rules should be established that determine what can and cannot be done by persons working alone.

Procedures will need to be established to monitor lone workers to ensure they remain safe. These may include:

- Periodically visiting and observing the person working alone;
- Regular communication by telephone or radio;
- Checking that the person has returned on completion of the work.

In addition the lone worker should be encouraged to:

- State where they are going and when they expect to be back;
- Report to persons in charge of the premises they are working in both on arrival and when they leave;
- Assess the job on arrival to establish for themselves that it is safe to work alone;
- Not put themselves in danger by taking unnecessary risks to complete the job on their own;
- Keep in regular contact with supervisors especially if the task changes or takes longer than expected.

Your industry will always require persons to work alone and in most circumstances this will not put you at risk. Remember: health and safety is your responsibility, do not take risks which place you in danger. If you are in any doubt seek advice from your supervisor.