

Lone workers – an employees' guide

A Lone Worker (LW) is defined as a person working on their own without close or direct supervision.

LONE WORKER – RISK ASSESSMENT

As a lone working employee you should know that your employer has carried out a risk assessment of your role and put in place reasonable and appropriate measures for your protection. Measures may include a risk management service as well as a defined Lone Worker Policy (LWP). It is your responsibility to conform to these measures and to accept that you have a duty to your own care also. Your employer should discuss with you the following three fundamental aspects of risks (if they are applicable) appropriate to your situation:

- The probability/exposure to violence and aggression.
- The probability/exposure to occupational risks (e.g. slips, trips, falls, electrocution, etc).
- The probability/exposure to personal well being risks (e.g. Health issues; reaction under duress scenarios; ability to cope with pressure).

Before you start work as a lone worker your employer should discuss with you:

- Your responsibilities.
- The risks you face.
- Any lone worker guidance or policy prepared by your employer.
- Any issue that may affect your working alone.

THE LONE WORKER SERVICE

If your employer's risk assessment has determined that it is appropriate to provide you with a monitored lone worker service including a device to call for help, you should:

- Understand the functions of your lone worker device.
- Be trained in its use.
- Keep the device charged and available for use.
- Understand the response strategy and under what conditions will the Police be involved.
- Do not misuse your lone worker device, it is there to summon help in an emergency or if you feel threatened.

(Note: please be aware that the code of practice relating to lone worker service is British Standard BS8484. To gain a level 1 police response your lone worker service will be required to comply to this standard.)

YOUR LONE WORKER CHECKLIST

- Have I received the appropriate training (e.g. conflict resolution training, emergency procedures, clarity on my employer's LWP)?
- Do I have the appropriate equipment e.g. a torch, communications, life vest (if working in a maritime environment)?
- Have any new hazards been identified and reported?
- Have I worked with my employer to take action to reduce or eliminate any hazards?
- When working alone am I aware of my surroundings and any possible threats?
- Do I leave a situation if I feel unsafe and back away from threatening situations? What is my employer's policy on this?
- Do I know my escape routes?
- Do I report any incident as soon as possible to my line manager?
- Ensure that you inform your employer of any changes to your personal details that are relevant to your lone worker employment.

DAY-TO-DAY USE OF A LW DEVICE:

- The use of the LW alarm is only for summoning support/help if you are threatened or have had an accident. In all other situations use your normal means (mobile, fixed telephone) for communications. If your LW device has a pre alarm function for use as part of your dynamic risk assessment you should use this before entering an 'at risk' environment.
- Ensure that the battery is fully charged before starting your shift
- If travelling to a remote location check before you leave your vehicle that the lone worker device has signal strength.
- Protect your LW device against the environment (unless it is weather and shock proof).
- Ensure you are fully aware of all the functions on your device (e.g use of the man-down function) to minimise false alarms.
- Depending on the type of LW device and the environment you are working in ensure that your LW device is placed in a position on your person that it can be activated easily, one handed and discreetly if required.

Your safety is your priority – Keep yourself safe

Other sources of information

BS 8484: 2009 – Code of practice for the provision of lone worker device (LWD) services

BSIA form 288 – Lone Workers – an employers guide: www.bsia.co.uk/publications

BSIA form 248 – A guide for the Health and safety for Lone Workers: www.bsia.co.uk/publications

Health and Safety Executive guidance document

Working alone – Health and Safety guidance on the risks of lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf

Health and Safety Executive guidance document

Five steps to risk assessment: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf

For other information please contact:

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