



**SAFETY POLICY / CODE of PRACTICE**

**LONE WORKERS**

**Date: July 2004**

# **LONE WORKERS**

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this Safety Policy / Code of Practice is to outline the health and safety issues associated with Lone Workers and to provide Heads of Department with sufficient information to ensure the safe working environment of Lone Workers.

The scope of this Safety Policy / Code of Practice will affect all personnel.

## **2. Definition**

A 'Lone Worker' might be defined as follows:

“A Lone Worker is an employee or authorised contractor who works alone in any environment where there are no other workers present who have knowledge of the work and workplace, and who are available to respond effectively to unusual occurrences or emergencies”

## **3. Examples of Lone Workers**

- Drivers
- Maintenance staff
- Domestic cleaning staff
- Security staff
- Homeworkers.
- Contractors

## **4. Legislation**

Under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the University has a legal duty to provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees and others who may be affected by our undertakings. This duty extends to those who work alone.

Although there is no overall prohibition on working alone there are some circumstances when the Law and the University requires at least two people to be involved in the work, for example:

- Work at or near live electrical conductors
- Entry into confined spaces (e.g. entry into storage tanks, manholes etc.)
- Young person(s) (under 18) working with certain machinery or involved with certain procedures, who must be under adequate supervision from a person who has a thorough knowledge and experience of the equipment/ procedures.

## **5. Lone Workers (Staff)**

### **5.1 Lone Workers Agreement**

Lone working arrangements must always be agreed in advance with a supervisor or manager.

## **5.2 Occasional Visits**

If a member of staff has reason to visit an unoccupied University building outside of normal working hours or at weekends, they should inform the duty porter prior to entering the building and after leaving and securing the building.

## **6. Contractors**

Contractors are not permitted to work alone on University premises unless the circumstances have been agreed with the Estates department and the relevant project manager and full consideration given to all aspects of security and safety and documented in their method statement and risk assessment. Contractors must also complete a 'Permit to Work'.

## **7. Action to be Taken**

The Head of Department should adopt a systematic approach to Lone Workers by:

- Identifying the, "at risk personnel", who work alone
- Prepare a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- Assess the working environment and identify any limitations which may need to be imposed on Lone Workers within the department.
- Devise and implement safe systems of work to ensure that the risks identified via the assessment procedure are eliminated or, at least, adequately controlled.

Where it is not possible to devise arrangements for a person to work alone in safety then the work/activity is not to be permitted and alternative arrangements must be considered.

## **8. Factors to be Considered**

The following factors should be considered (amongst others) when preparing the risk assessment:

- Access and egress – is lighting considered adequate, are means of escape kept clear?
- Have foreseeable emergency situations been considered – i.e. fire, illness (first aid provision)?
- Consider the actual process or work being undertaken and the risks associated with it.
- Consider the fitness and medical history of the person involved.
- Is there a risk of violence or abuse?
- Is potentially dangerous machinery involved?
- Will the work require the use of flammable/toxic substances?
- Is adequate ventilation available if working in confined spaces?
- Has suitable instruction/training been provided?
- Have adequate means of communication been considered – hand held radio, mobile phone, personal attack alarms. etc.?

## **9. Monitoring and Supervision of People Working Alone**

The following arrangements should be in place:

- Procedures whereby supervisors or security staff visit regularly and monitor people working alone.
- Procedures requiring lone workers to check in regularly by phone, mobile phone or radio.

- In certain circumstances the use of personal attack alarms should be considered.

In every situation there must be an appropriate means of ensuring that, at some stage, contact is made with a person working alone. It should also be possible for the lone worker to initiate contact.

**10. Heads of Department Checklist.**

The following represents a typical check list for HOD's to refer to when considering lone workers:

- Check and clearly identify work that is being done by people working alone and, where possible, ensure that work is organised so that working alone is unnecessary.
- Check that all hazards have been assessed and adequate control measures are in place for controlling the work safely.
- Ensure that persons working alone have received adequate training for their personal safety.
- Ensure that persons working alone receive monitoring and supervision
- Ensure that there are local procedures, where necessary, (i.e. permit to work etc) for those working alone and that they are being adhered to
- Ensure that working practices are reviewed, periodically and revised assessments made as necessary.
- Ensure that appropriate communications are in place and tested at regular intervals.
- Check that accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses of those working alone are properly reported, recorded, investigated and monitored and action taken to remedy any trends identified.
- Ensure that appropriate Personal Protective Equipment is available.
- Ensure that the work carried out by those working alone is not allowed to change without prior consideration to any additional risks and the subsequent amendment to the risk assessment.

**Review Safety Policy/Code of Practice – December 2006**

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**Dated**