Lone Working Policy and Guidance

Synopsis

This policy specifies the roles, responsibilities, actions and processes necessary to ensure safety of lone workers.

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Approval

Approved by: University Court

Date: October 4th 2016

Revision Record

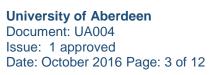| ISSUE	DATE	REASON FOR REVIEW
Draft 1	July 2016	New document for consultation
	September 2016	Considered at PNCC – no changes other than remove highlights and italics on use of Safezone app (sections 5.2.3 and 5.3.2)
Draft 2	September 2016	For consideration and approval by Court after highlights and italics removed on use of Safezone app (sections 5.2.3 and 5.3.2)
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DISTRIBUTION:

To: Principal, Senior Vice Principal, Vice Principal, Directors, Heads of School, University Safety Committee, Local Safety Coordinators

StaffNett - http://www.abdn.ac.uk/safety/resources/personal/lone_working/

Implementation

From receipt after approval

Contents

Standard Terms

Throughout this document standard terms have been used. The terms and their definitions are set out below:

Term	Definition
Lone Worker	Lone workers is one who works without close or direct supervision and where a risk assessment determines that there is enhanced risk to the lone worker (either because of the nature of the work or the nature of the work environment) such that there could be a need for on-hand assistance in the event of an accident.
Hazard	An unsafe act, an unsafe condition anything that has the potential to cause harm, including death, ill health, injury, damage to property, process or the environment.
Unsafe Act	A human act or omission with the potential to cause death, injury, ill health, damage to property, process or the environment
Unsafe Condition	Environmental or physical condition with the potential to cause death, injury, ill health, damage to property, process or the environment
Risk	The likelihood of hazard causing harm to person or damage to property.
Risk assessment	An assessment of the likelihood of hazards present in a work place or activity causing harm or damage and likely consequence of such harm or damage occurring.
Because We Care	This is the University of Aberdeen's approach to Health, Safety and Wellbeing of staff and students. It underpins the hearts and minds way of continuously improving.

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POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 Lone working can occur in any part of the University and need to be risk assessed to have in place safeguards to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the lone worker. This policy outlines the way in which the University of Aberdeen will support it's Because We Care approach and deal with and manage the risks associated with lone working on or off Campus. All departments/schools are required to have in place local arrangements that comply with this policy.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to set requirements and standards of risk assessment with safe systems for lone working in the University of Aberdeen.

3. Scope

3.1 This Policy applies to all University of Aberdeen schools and departments.

3.2 This Policy does not apply to an individual finding themselves on their own. For example, in every workplace individuals may be the first or last person in an office or they may have to go into an unoccupied storeroom or everyone else has gone for a break.

4. Objectives

4.1 A risk assessment shall be carried out of the lone work activity and the work environment to identify safety measures that are necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and wellbeing of anyone required to work as a lone worker.

4.2 Where appropriate, the fitness of the lone worker shall be assessed to ensure that no medical or physical issues will affect the safety of the lone worker.

4.3 Where necessary, additional training shall be provided to a lone worker in the safety measures and emergency procedures.

4.4 Arrangements to monitor and review lone working shall be in place as part of safety inspections and safety audits to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of lone worker.

4.5 All departments/schools shall have in place local arrangements that comply with this Policy.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Vice Principals, Heads of Schools, and Directors shall:

5.1.1 Institute procedures and safe systems of work that are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone.

5.1.2 Ensure that sufficient resources are made available to control and manage lone working arrangements.

5.1.3 Ensure that those identified as lone workers receive appropriate information, instruction and training.

5.1.4 Ensure that the lone worker risk assessment is communicated to all relevant staff and that they comply with the control measures put in place for their safety.

5.1.5 Ensure that all lone worker incidents are fully investigated.

5.1.6 Ensure that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.

5.2 Line Managers shall:

5.2.1 Ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the procedure.

5.2.2 Ensure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.

5.2.3 Ensure that measures (to include use of Safezone app where available) are implemented and maintained to reduce the risk of lone working to its lowest reasonably practicable level.

5.3 Staff shall:

5.3. 1 Ensure the risk assessment for the task to be undertaken permits lone working.

5.3.2 Ensure they are aware of and understand the control measures (to include use of Safezone app where available) to be taken.

5.3.3 Follow the safe system of work and other control measures;

5.3.4 Report any incidents occurring whilst working alone, by means of the University's incident reporting system

6. Management Review

6.1 This Policy shall be reviewed at least annually by the Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing or when any of the following occur:

a) Internal reorganisation or restructuring.

b) After any injury or incident or significant performance disruption that highlights the need for review.

c) Any change in relevant legislation that has an impact on the Policy

6.2 The purpose of the periodic review is also to:

a) Assess whether the objectives set out in section 4 are achieved consistently.

b) Ensure that recommendations emanating from previous reviews have been implemented and the required outcomes are being achieved.

Appendix A: Lone Working Policy Guidance

Risk Assessment

Lone work is work which is specifically intended to be carried out unaccompanied or without immediate access to another employee. It is not the same as an individual finding themselves on their own. For example, in every workplace individuals may be the first or last person in an office or they may have to go into an unoccupied storeroom.

Lone working can occur:

- During normal working hours at a remote location either within the normal workplace or offsite visit; and
- When working outside normal working hours.

Departmental procedures need to take account of the possibility of both situations arising and should define what constitutes 'normal working hours'.

Working alone is specifically prohibited by law only in a small number of well-established dangerous situations such as working with live electrical conductors and entry into confined spaces. However, there is no general legal prohibition on lone working and the University's responsibility is to ensure the health and safety of staff working alone and others affected by these activities.

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management, and must be carried out by a competent person.

Completing a risk assessment for lone working is no different to completing other risk assessments. The risk assessor should:

- Identify the hazards associated with the work and carrying it out unaccompanied;
- Assess the risks associated with the work and decide on the safe working arrangements to control these risks;
- Record the findings of the assessment;
- Implement the safe working procedures; and
- Monitor and review the safe working procedure.

Identify the hazards associated with the work and carrying it out unaccompanied

The hazards associated with the work are likely to be the same whether it is carried out alone or accompanied, although the possibility of violence towards the lone worker, in certain situations, should always be considered. Those carrying out assessments should therefore use the techniques they normally use for hazard identification when considering the hazards of lone working.

Assess the risks associated with the work and decide on the safe working arrangements to control the risk

Although working alone may not introduce any new hazards, the risks may differ significantly when a task is carried out unaccompanied.

Some of the issues that need to be considered when evaluating the risks and planning safe working procedures are as follows:

Can one person adequately control the risks of the job?

Lone workers should not be placed at more risk than other employees and extra control measures may be required. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies such as fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Managers should identify situations where people work alone and consider the following:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there safe way in and out for one person, e.g. for a lone person working out of hours where the workplace could be locked up?
- Is there machinery or equipment involved in the work that one person cannot operate safely?
- Are chemicals or hazardous substances being used that may pose a particular risk to the lone worker?
- Does the work involve lifting objects too large for one person?
- Can one person safely handle any necessary temporary access equipment, such as portable ladders or trestles?
- Are there any reasons why the individual might be more vulnerable than others and be particularly at risk if they work alone for example if they are a young worker, pregnant, disabled or a trainee)?
- Are the welfare facilities adequate?
- Can one person safely handle all plant, substances and goods involved in the work?
- Is there a risk of violence and/or aggression?
- If the lone worker's first language is not English, are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communications, especially in an emergency?

What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help people in uncertain situations. Training may also be crucial in enabling people to cope in unexpected circumstance and with potential exposure to violence and aggression.

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions involved in their work and the location they work in. Managers should ensure employees are competent to deal with the requirements of the job and are able to recognise when to seek advice. There should be an agreement on the circumstances in which it is reasonable to stop work and seek advice. It is a management responsibility to ensure employees are competent to carry out the work unaccompanied and are competent to deal with circumstances that are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training.

How will the person be supervised?

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, there is still a duty on the employer to provide appropriate control of the work. Supervision complements the information, instruction and training provided and helps to ensure that staff understand the risks associated with their work and that necessary safety precautions are carried out. It also provides guidance in situations of uncertainty.

The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues. The level of supervision required is a management decision which should be based on the outcome of the risk assessment. The higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they need assistance.

Monitoring

Procedures that may need to be in place to monitor lone workers include:

- Managers periodically visiting and observing people working alone;
- Managers maintaining contact with lone workers using either a telephone or radio or possibly e-mail or SMS as available.
- Contact arrangements should be documented as part of the risk assessment;
- The use of University's Safezone app for signing in/out system or some other system; and
- Checks that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of their tasks.

Contingency plans should specify the action to be taken if a pre-arranged contact cannot be reached, or if an alarm device is activated, and should be included as part of the risk assessment.

Where a worker is new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job that presents specific risks, or dealing with new situations, it may be advisable for them to be accompanied when they first take up the post.

If a person has a medical conditions, are they able to work alone?

Where a manager is aware that a lone worker has a medical condition, they should check whether they require any additional support in order for them to work alone safely. They should consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual. When medical advice is necessary, the Occupational Health Service should be consulted.

What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident, or there is an emergency?

The assessments should take account of the fact that a lone worker is may be more vulnerable when the unexpected happens. Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events and emergency procedures such as use of University's Safezone app or other procedure should be established and employees trained in them. Information regarding emergency procedure should be given to lone workers. They should also have access to adequate first aid facilities.

Record the outcome of the risk assessment

Specific risk assessments need to be recorded individually. This should be done in a way that provides a useful working document for managers and staff.

All records of risk assessments should include information on:

- The hazards identified.
- The safe working procedures that are necessary, including the physical controls, training, supervision and monitoring/contact arrangements.
- The contingency plan, should the monitoring/contact arrangements fail to operate.
- Any limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone.
- In the case of work outside normal hours, the definition of the term 'normal hours'.

A blank template for a Risk Assessment for Lone Workers is at Appendix B.

Implement the safe working arrangements

The risk assessment will have identified the physical controls, systems of work, training and supervision necessary to ensure the safety of the lone worker. If all of these arrangements are not already in place, they will need to be implemented in a structured way before the lone working can start. An action plan with target dates for completion of the outstanding work is often the most appropriate way of ensuring that the necessary arrangements are put in place effectively.

Monitor and review the safe working arrangements

Once the safe working arrangements have been implemented they need to be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure they remain effective. Monitoring the way in which people are working is a routine day-to-day management function. More formal monitoring of the arrangements will also take place as part of the health and safety audit programme. Lone workers must be actively encouraged to report any incidents which could affect their safety, to allow a proper review of the adequacy of the working arrangements.

All risk assessments should be reviewed at regular intervals, at least once a year or whenever there is a reason to believe that the existing assessment is no longer valid. A record should be made of every review carried out.

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Appendix B: Risk Assessment Template

See below

Lone Working Plan and Risk Assessment

Where is the lone working to take place?	
When is the lone working taking place? (date and time)	
Brief outline of the reasons for lone working	
Manager or supervisor's contact details, email and phone	
LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE	

The University of Aberdeen has produced this risk assessment template for you to use to assess the risks of associated with lone working. This an important part of the planning for the safe system of work for lone working.

You should use this as a minimum standard. We have already populated the template with some of the more common risks. You need to assess these risks before controls are applied by using the guidance on the attached tab then input what controls you are going to apply. After this you then need to reassess the risks. You must also add to the risks and not just use our most common risks. You also need to consider who may be harmed your volunteers, students, members of the public, University staff, contractors etc.

Remember - this is your Risk Assessment and should remain a working document.

Risk Assessment of Field Trips/Travel

Step 1: Identify the hazards

Identification of hazards and potential sources of hazards can be from prior knowledge and understanding or experience or by researching throughly the available data from reliable sources.

Although working alone may not introduce any new hazards, the risks may differ significantly when a task is carried out unaccompanied.

Some of the issues that need to be considered when evaluating the risks and planning safe working procedures are as follows:

Access and egress; machinery and equipment; chemicals or hazardouse substances; manual handling; ladders or trestles;

Step 2: Decide who and how they might be harmed and how

For each hazard you need to be clear about how the lone worker might be harmed ; it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk.

Remember: some people may have particular requirements, eg new and young workers , new or expectant mothers and people with disabilities may be at particular risk. Extra thought will be needed for some hazards that may well be very unsual in nature and may only be very occasional.

In each case, think through how they might be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur. For example, some may suffer back injury from lifting of equipment.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Having identified the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. You can work this out for yourself, but the easiest way is to compare what you are doing with good practice.

First, look at what you're already doing, think about what controls you have in place and how it is organised. Then compare this with the good practice and see if there's more you should be doing to bring yourself up to standard. In asking yourself this, consider:

1 - Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?

2 - If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

When controlling risks, apply the principles below, if possible in the following order: try a less risky option (eg switch to using a less hazardous chemical); prevent access to the hazard (eg by guarding); organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard (eg put barriers between pedestrians and traffic); issue personal protective equipment (eg clothing, footwear, goggles etc); and provide welfare facilities (eg first aid and washing facilities for removal of contamination).

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a dangerous blind corner to help prevent vehicle accidents is a low-cost precaution considering the risks. Failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if an accident does happen.

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice will make a difference when looking after people .

Writing down the results of your risk assessment, and sharing them, encourages you to do this.

When writing down your results, keep it simple, for example 'Tripping over rubbish: bins provided, staff instructed, weekly housekeeping checks'.

We do not expect a risk assessment to be perfect, but it must be suitable and sufficient. You need to be able to show that: a proper check was made; you asked who might be affected; you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved; the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low; and you involved your staff or their representatives in the process.

Step 5: Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

Things are likely to change after first conducting your risk assessment and. It makes sense therefore, to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis.

Look at your risk assessment and think about whether there have been any changes? Are there improvements you still need to make? Have other people spotted a problem? Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses? Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.

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What is the Hazard?	0							

Hazard or hazard source	Risk of	S	L	RFR	Control measures or actions to reduce the risk	S	L	RRR
		(1-5)	(1-5)	(1-25)		(1-5)	(1-5)	(1-25)
		Before control measures				After control measures		
Example:-Fire	*Example: Staff being injured*	*5*	*2*	*10*	*Example: Emergency evacuation plans in place. All electrical equipment tested. Smoke detectors and fire alarm installed.*	*5*	*1*	*5*
Access and egress	Being trapped if doors locked by someone not knowing there is someone else in the building			*0*				*0*
Manual handling	Back strain or injury			*0*				*0*
Chemicals	Exposure to harmful substance			*0*				*0*

Biological substance	Exposure to harmful substance			*0*		0	*0*
Machinery	Entrapament/Crushing			*0*		0	*0*
Physical violence	Injury			*0*		0	*0*
Radioactive substance	Exposure to harmful substance			*0*		0	*0*
Laser	Exposure to harmful substance			*0*		0	*0*

Power failure	Equipment shut down			*0*		0	*0*
Trailing cables or slippery floors	Slips, trips and falls			*0*		0	*0*
Workload	Physical and mental exhaustion			*0*		0	*0*
Gas escape	Asphyxiation			*0*		0	*0*
Gas escape	Fire			*0*		0	*0*

				0		0		0
Fainting	Medical condition or emergency			0		0		0
Theft, mugging or assault	Physical and mental injury			0		0		0
Complacency or horseplay	Injury			0		0		0
Drugs or alcohol use				0		0		0
Other				0		0		0

Other				0		0		0
Other				0		0		0
Other				0		0		0
Other				0		0		0

ACTION PLAN

Please complete the list below with actions identified above.

Action	Responsibility	Date

RISK FACTOR MATRIX			Severity (What could the impact be?) → → → →				
			1	2	3	4	5
			Trivial Injury	Minor Injury	Potential Major Injury	Major Injury	Fatality
Likelihood (How likely is it to occur) ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓			A trivial injury or condition not requiring hospital treatment could occur	A minor injury or condition could occur which may require minor hospital treatment	A major injury or condition could occur resulting in an over seven days absence from work	A major injury or condition will occur unless risk controls are put in place	A fatality will occur unless robust risk controls are put in place
5	Certain It will almost certainly occur?		5 LOW	10 MEDIUM	15 HIGH	20 HIGH	25 HIGH
4	Frequent occurrence It could occur on a regular basis?		4 LOW	8 MEDIUM	12 HIGH	16 HIGH	20 HIGH
3	Likely occurrence It could occur but not on a regular basis?		3 LOW	6 MEDIUM	9 MEDIUM	12 HIGH	15 HIGH
2	Occasional occurrence It is unlikely to occur but it is possible?		2 LOW	4 LOW	6 MEDIUM	8 MEDIUM	10 MEDIUM
1	Improbable occurrence It is very unlikely to occur?		1 LOW	2 LOW	3 LOW	4 LOW	5 LOW

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RISK ACTION		
Severity (S) X Likelihood (L) = RISK FACTOR RATING (RRF) before risk controls.		
After risk controls are applied = RESIDUAL RISK RATING (RRR)		
1 - 5	Indicates a **LOW** risk	Proceed with caution as there could still be risks present
6 - 10	Indicates a **MEDIUM** risk	Proceed with caution as there are Medium risks still present. Improve control measures if reasonably practicable.
12 - 25	**Indicates a HIGH risk**	**DO NOT PROCEED. Further control measures need to be applied to reduce the risk to a Medium or Low risk**