

Safety Management Standard

Lone Working

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1. Introduction

University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust recognises its duties under the *Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAWA) 1974, The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999* to provide suitable arrangements to protect lone workers from harm.

Due to the nature of the work within University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust, a significant number of employees are required to work alone. The Trust recognises the various risks that staff may face and has considered the actions that should be taken.

If staff work alone and/or face potentially hostile or abusive situations, it is important to have a system in place to ensure that an alarm can be raised if assistance is required.

Health and Safety Legislation requires employers and managers to assess risks to staff whilst lone working and decide for effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review. This Safety Management Standard deals with generic aspects of management of lone working risks and provides advice on the efficiency of various actions that may be utilised to reduce these risks.

Please see University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust Intranet page for more details. <https://neti.uhdb.nhs.uk/hsw-health-and-safety-lone-working>

2. Purpose and Outcomes

This Safety Management Standard (SMS) supplements the Health and Safety Policy and is a guide for managers in protecting lone workers when either in the workplace or community.

This Safety Management Standard is specifically aimed at those staff whose work is intended to be carried out unaccompanied or without immediate access to another

person for assistance and applies to bank, locum, permanent and fixed term contract employees (including apprentices) who hold a contract of employment or engagement with the Trust, and secondees (including students), Volunteers, Non-Executive Directors, governors and those undertaking research working within University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust. It also applies to external contractors, Agency workers, and other workers who are assigned to University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust

3. Definitions Used

Lone working is defined as people who work entirely on their own for periods of time, or those who are not alone, but are with colleagues whom they can rely on for help (remote worker). An example would be a Health Care Worker who travels around in the Local Community visiting patients to provide care.

Lone workers are vulnerable in certain instances. They may be more at risk of violence and aggression, particularly if the worker exposed to members of the public, has to travel into the community or is involved in work that brings them in contact with violent people.

Lone working is a term that's as equally applicable to desk workers empowered by technology to work from any location as it is to engineers or manual workers 'out in the field'. They exist in all sectors, including those who:

- work by themselves away from a fixed base
- work on the same premises but out of sight and sound of a colleague
- work outside normal working hours
- work alone but alongside members of the public or in populated locations
- work from home
- travel alone during work hours
- are left alone for periods of time

4. The Law

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAWA) 1974 cover lone working in so far as these laws require: Employers are responsible by law for the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers and any contractors or self-employed people doing work for them. These legal obligations cannot be transferred to any other person, including those people who work alone.

Regulation 4 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 states that in implementing any preventative and protective measures, the employer must do so on the basis of the principle listed in schedule 1. The principles are;

- Avoid risks
- Evaluate risks which cannot be avoided
- Combat risks at source
- Adapt work to suit the individual
- Replace the dangerous with non-dangerous or less dangerous
- Develop a coherent overall prevention policy
- Giving priority to collective protective measures over individual protective measures
- Give appropriate instructions to employees

Regulation 6 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty on all employers to ensure that their employees are provided with appropriate health and safety surveillance, having regard to any risks to their health and safety identified by the risk assessment.

Other laws that cover lone working are:

- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. This does not apply to indoor workers.

- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.
- The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.

5. The responsibility of the Employer

Employers must carry out a general risk assessment for their employees to assess all health and safety risks they are exposed to while at work. As part of that process, employers should consider the identification of hazards from:

- Access or Egress.
- Equipment.
- Substances.
- Environment.
- Travel.
- Communication.

Consideration must be given to interference, such as violence or criminal activity from other persons.

The Risk Assessments must consider staff that are hospital based and work in the Community or at home. While it is a legal obligation for employers to regularly review general workplace risks, there is no legal requirement to conduct a specific, separate risk assessment for an employee. However, employers have a legal duty to check and, if necessary, update the general risk assessment for any employee if they suspect it is no longer valid, or there have been significant changes to anything it relates to. As part of that process, the employer should regularly monitor and review the assessment in the workplace, considering possible risks that may occur due to either a change in the working environment or place of work i.e. patients home.

UHDB require managers to have a local generic risk assessment in place for all lone workers. The risk assessment should be kept in the employees personal file and reviewed as and when any changes arise.

6. The responsibility of the Employee

Lone workers (including self-employed) also have a responsibility to: **take reasonable care to look after their own health and safety**, safeguard the health and safety of other people affected by their work, co-operate with their employer's health and safety procedures.

Employees must adhere to the principles detailed below:

- Follow health and safety instruction. All employees should follow any health and safety instructions and training they receive.
- Attend health and safety training.
- Adhere to safety procedures.
- Report any hazards or failings in safety procedures.
- Be proactive.
- Wear the appropriate PPE.
- Do not take drugs (unless prescribed by a healthcare professional) or consume alcohol before or at work.
- Treat others with respect.
- Do not place others at risk.

7. Training

7.1 Training is crucial for all groups of staff who undertake lone working and, it is the line manager's responsibility to ensure staff are booked on relevant courses that would enhance staff safety.

7.2 It is the employee's responsibility to attend any training specific to them, requested by their manager.

8. What are the risks and hazards to be assessed?

Whilst it is difficult to create a generic risk assessment for all lone workers, given that every individual job role is different, there are a number of key areas a manager can consider and assess when undertaking a risk assessment. Below are some areas for consideration in undertaking a specific assessment of needs of the employee,

Severe Weather

- Inform your line manager that you are going on a visit, where, how long and which route.

Road Traffic Collision

- Do not leave the scene
- Do not admit liability
- Exchange insurance details
- Complete a Datix
- Inform your line manager

Car Breakdown

- Turn on your Hazard Warning lights.
- Risk assess your own safety. Is it safe to stay in the car (consider where the car is i.e. side road or dual carriage way), consider street lighting and the time of day.
- Lock your doors.
- Place a warning triangle if your car has one.
- Phone your breakdown company.
- Phone your Line Manager to inform them of your circumstances.

Personal safety on foot

- Avoid walking alone at night.
- Do not take short cuts.
- Avoid underpasses and poorly lit streets.
- Carry a mobile phone in your pocket.

9. Monitoring & Review

This Safety Management Standard will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Health and Safety Team to:

- Ensure it continues to comply with legislation
- Ensure that it is reasonably practicable to implement to all those concerned within the Trust.

10. Further information

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has a range of information on risk management. General information is available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/> . For information on specific risks consult one of our other health & safety management standards or use the search function at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>.

We hope you find this SMS useful; if you require further information please contact one of the health and safety team:



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Health and Safety



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