



FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

LONE WORKER POLICY

Introduction/Purpose

Four Marks Parish Council ("the Council") recognises that staff are required to work by themselves without close or direct supervision. Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure all lone workers are aware of the specific risks in doing so, and
2. Set out the respective responsibilities of the employer and lone workers to minimise such risks.

Definition

Lone workers are employees who, at any time, work by themselves in the office, cemeteries or at other locations managed by the Council in isolation from their colleagues and without close or direct supervision.

Scope

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the Council and to all employees permanent, temporary, or voluntary.

Lone working includes:

1. Those working at their main place of work where:
 - Only one person is working on the premises
 - People work separately from each other, e.g., in different locations
 - People working outside normal office hours
2. Those working away from their fixed base where:
 - One worker is visiting another agency's premises or meeting venue
 - One worker is making a home visit to an individual
 - One worker is working from their own home.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, that staff who work alone are not exposed to Health & Safety risks and to outline the steps which reduce and improve personal safety to staff who work alone, to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working

- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related lone working.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment should be carried out for and by all employees who are going to be working alone. Consideration should be given to:

- I. Violence and aggression
- II. Isolated areas
- III. Difficult terrain
- IV. First aid, sudden illness, injury
- V. Building conditions
- VI. Substances hazardous to health
- VII. Animals
- VIII. Vehicle breakdowns
- IX. Weather hazards

The list is not exhaustive and other risks may be identified during the assessment process.

Responsibility of the Employer

The Council, as the Employer, commits to carrying out its responsibilities in a thorough and disciplined way to:

- I. Show that 'reasonably foreseeable risks' have been identified through risk assessments, with appropriate action(s) taken to minimise them, subject to annual review.
- II. Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all lone working with standard health and safety practices adhered to.
- III. Install all reasonable security equipment and systems and put procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone in consultation with lone workers.
- IV. Ensure lone workers in vulnerable positions have adequate communication tools and techniques to ensure they can summon help when needed and communication systems are in place (e.g., mobile phones) to enable contact to be made with staff who have failed to make contact or return at the expected time.
- V. Provide personal safety equipment, where this is felt to be desirable, and access to First Aid equipment.
- VI. Ensure that staff identified as being at risk are given the appropriate information, instruction, and training (including training at induction) in personal safety to, and inspection of, lone workers to include what to do in the event of a fire, suspicion of intruders, how to exit the buildings quickly and safely and where to locate the first aid kit. Updating and refreshing the training as necessary.
- VII. Keep proper records of all lone workers with next of kin, emergency contact information etc.
- VIII. Insist that all lone workers have a copy of, or access to, this policy.
- IX. Ensure that each lone worker feels that the employer has taken all reasonable steps to protect their safety.

- X. Ensure that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed.
- XI. Provide resources for putting the policy into practice.
- XII. Ensure that lone workers are not any greater risk than any other employees.
- XIII. Identify situations where people work alone and decide whether a system can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own.
- XIV. Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating, and recording incidents.
- XV. Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.

Responsibility of the Employee/Lone Worker

Section 7 of the Act requires employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work. It is a condition of employment that staff will abide by this policy and failure to do so may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Employees should:

- I. Follow guidance and procedures designed for safe working.
- II. Report all incidents*, including any dangers or potential dangers they identify, any concerns they may have in respect of working alone, or any suspicious behaviour or threats towards them, that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and ask for guidance as appropriate.
*(*An incident can be defined as an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill-health, or damage).*
- III. Take part in training and avail themselves of all training opportunities provided by the Employer, designed to meet the requirements of this policy.
- IV. If office based, ensure that personal alarm is worn at all times.
- V. If during office opening hours, have access to the means of summoning emergency assistance by phone.
- VI. Avoid placing themselves in unnecessarily dangerous or vulnerable situations (e.g., anyone working on preparation for events or maintenance, either inside or outside, or a member of staff travelling by car on their own in the course of their work).
- VII. Be alert to possible dangers and to minimise risk by their own behaviours (e.g. physical accident, injury, or sudden illness, when there is no-one available to fetch help or support; physical violence, abuse, or threat of any kind from a visitor; sexual or other behaviour deemed inappropriate, threatening, or controlling; accusations by a visitor of inappropriate behaviour when there are no witnesses, and stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive phone calls, digital/social media, etc).
- VIII. During working hours when leaving the workplace advising a member of the Council or the Clerk of their destination and estimated time of arrival back. Ensure that staff member has a mobile phone or use of the Parish mobile when completing site visits.
- IX. Before making a site visit, have full knowledge of the hazards, and risk to which they may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce potential risks.
- X. While working away from the workplace and plans change significantly, communicate back to a member of the Council or the Clerk.
- XI. When working out of hours, either arriving early or working late, confirm safe arrival and/or expected time back home.

- XII. Inform a member of the Council or Clerk if they have a medical condition which would make them unsuitable for working alone. Where a medical condition is known, a risk assessment must be conducted to enable consideration to be given to routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional or specific risks.
- XIII. If a job is assessed to have sufficient risk, arrangements should be made with the Council or the Clerk to check that the lone worker has returned or delay the visit until two members of staff and/or a Parish Councillor can attend.
- XIV. Have access to a first aid kit, suitable for treating minor injuries and be provided with personal safety equipment where necessary.
- XV. Drive responsibly and keep vehicle properly insured, tested, and adequately maintained, with breakdown insurance, always with sufficient fuel for any journey and to park in areas that are well lit at night.

Violence at Work

There are five main pieces of Health & Safety legislation which are relevant to violence at work.

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSW Act).
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (s).
- The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 9b).

The Health & Safety Executive defines work-related violence as: 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'.

Incident Reporting

An incident is defined as "an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage". To maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers, it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or "unsafe" (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

Contacting/Involving the Police

The Council is committed to protecting its staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the Police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process. Except in the cases of emergency, staff should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

Support for Staff

Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers' training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

Immediate Support following a Violent Incident

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice.

Ongoing Support

In the event any incidents have left staff vulnerable, the Clerk will ensure that the employee receives any necessary treatment or advice for ongoing trauma, that has resulted from the incident.

Where the items above relate directly to the Clerk as a staff member the appropriate controls will be exercised by the Council or, in an emergency, the Chair of the Council.