

National Health & Safety Function, WHWU

HSE Policy on Lone Working 2017

Fast Fact 013:01

FAST FACTS provide a brief overview of various health and safety topics to support managers, employees, safety representatives and others. Additional information, if required, is available by visiting our website at: www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing. Why not bring this to your Safety Committees/Departmental Meeting for discussion?

This FAST FACT provides a brief overview of the HSE Policy on Lone Working 2017

The policy can be downloaded [here](#).



DID YOU KNOW THAT Lone workers are those employees who work by themselves without close or direct supervision i.e. employees who are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance E.G.

- In fixed workplaces e.g. Health Centres, employees working out of hours in laboratories, x-ray departments, isolation patient care cubicles, reception areas, community group homes, maintenance departments etc.
- Workers working away from their base e.g. Ambulance personnel, employees working/attending meetings in non HSE facility etc

Lone working has its own unique set of risks which need to be considered by both employers and employees as part of a risk management programme.

POLICY STATEMENT: The HSE acknowledges that some employees are required to work alone in a diverse range of environments, and in this regard, it is the policy of the HSE to ensure the safety of lone workers by minimising the related risk and putting in place appropriate measures to improve their safety.

PURPOSE : To raise awareness, describe procedures and provide a framework to support Managers in managing lone working activities in consultation with their employees and to identify the responsibilities each employee has in relation to his/her role as a lone worker.

KEY HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION

- The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.
- Regulation 2 (3) of the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007

MANAGERS' KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers:

- Carry out a suitable and sufficient written risk assessment (to include the identification of lone workers) in consultation with employees, thus ensuring that all hazards associated with lone working are identified and appropriate control measures introduced to eliminate, minimise, or control the risks
- Establish clear procedures to set limits as to what can and cannot be done while working alone and where appropriate, when to stop and seek advice
- Undertake a training needs assessment based on the activities undertaken by their staff
- Provide sufficient information, training, instruction and supervision
- Regular reviews of control measures to ensure that they are effective and continue to meet the requirements of the lone worker



EMPLOYEES' KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees must:

- Adhere to and apply this Policy and any other relevant HSE policies/circulars, local procedures and safe systems of work and associated risk assessments and controls
- Conduct a Dynamic Risk Assessment
- Report any matters of concern and any accidents, incidents and near misses in relation to lone working to include defects in equipment or the place of work and any unsafe systems or work to the Line Manager
- Comply with any safety measures (e.g. Lone worker systems/devices, buddy system etc), that have been introduced to protect the personal safety of lone workers

Detailed Roles and Responsibilities are outlined in the *HSE Policy on Lone Working 2017*

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Health and Safety General Risk Assessment Form					
Division:		Source of Risk:			
HG/CHO/NAS/Function:		Primary Impact Category:			
Hospital Site/Service:		Risk Type:			
Dept/Service Site:		Name of Risk Owner (BLOCKS):			
Date of Assessment:		Signature of Risk Owner:			
Unique ID No:		Risk Co-Ordinator:			
		Risk Assessor (s):			
HAZARD & RISK DESCRIPTION	EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES	ADDITIONAL CONTROLS REQUIRED	ACTION OWNER	DUE DATE	
INITIAL RISK			Risk Status		
Likelihood	Impact	Initial Risk Rating	Open	Monitor	Closed

The risk assessment process for a given task comprises of the following FOUR STEPS which are detailed in *Appendix 1 HSE Policy on Lone Working 2017*.

When carrying out your risk assessment consideration should be given to the hazards and identified risks associated with the Environment; the Context; the Clientele; the History

Step 1 - Identify the Hazard

Step 2- Identify the Risks associated with the hazard

Step 3 - Assess (i.e. Rate) the risks

Step 4 - Identify any additional control measures (if any) required (i.e. evaluate and treat the risks)

Risk control measures include the following:

- Information Sharing
- Service User Referrals
- Central point of contact (control point)
- Visits away from base
- Fixed Establishments
- Technology (Lone Worker Systems/Devices)
- Emergency Procedures
- Information, Awareness, Training and Supervision

DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS (APPENDIX II)

A dynamic risk assessment is an undocumented on the spot risk assessment which can be defined as “a continuous process of identifying hazards and the risk of them causing harm and taking steps to eliminate or reduce them in the rapidly changing circumstances”. Whilst this is carried out informally, any significant aspects must be recorded in case notes and reported to Line Manager at the earliest opportunity. The dynamic risk assessment involves employees *Carrying out 10 second risk assessments, being alert to warning signs, being aware of all entrances and exits etc.*

A STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

A step-by-step procedure to implement the *HSE Policy on Lone Working 2017* is given in Appendix VIII of the Policy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION (For Full List please refer to the Policy)

- [Health and Safety Authority \(2011\) Guidance on Lone Working in the Healthcare Sector](#)
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust, available at www.suzylamplugh.org

