

Lone Working Policy

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Policy

The Laurus Trust recognises its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act, to provide a safe and secure environment for all employees.

Any existing or new occupation that includes working alone must have a written risk assessment completed to identify whether the activity poses a risk to the safety and well being of the identified employee group or individual.

This duty of care applies to employees engaged in lone working on the Trust premises and / or at premises controlled by others. Where contractors (or other third parties) are invited onto the academy controlled premises to work alone there is a need to view the lone working risk assessment of the supplying company / organisation.

Written procedures must be completed in instances where lone working occurs in order to address the safety and security of the employees concerned, so far as is reasonably practicable. Equally, all employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care in respect of their own safety and security.

Employees must co-operate with their managers in complying with guidelines associated with working alone.

Please note,

Each Department is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

1. Definitions

A lone worker is anyone who works without close or direct supervision or support. Such workers are found in a wide range of situations. Typical lone working situations include employees who work alone in a specific area or building, or may include mobile workers who work alone but in a number of locations or those who visit other premises / organisations.

The examples below indicate some of the likely types of lone working that workers may undertake.

- A person who works alone in a separate building,
- Anyone who works alone in an isolated part of a building,
- Someone who works alone outside normal office working hours, e.g. employee working late, duty officer, cleaner, caretaker,
- Those who work alone and visit service users at home or regularly attend other premises,
- Someone working away from their fixed base
- A person classified as a home worker.

2. Guidance on Risk Assessment

Although the areas set out above will have specific operational guidelines there are a number of general principles common to all lone working situations. Some of the generic issues for managers to consider in lone working situations are outlined below.

i. **Risk Assessment**

Heads of Departments / Line Managers of persons considered to be 'lone workers' must complete a written risk assessment of the occupational role (c.f. Appendix 1). This assessment identifies potential hazards, identifies existing precautions and assesses the risk. Part of the risk assessment process is to identify and implement any additional measures that need to be implemented to avoid or control these risks (c. f. Appendix 2). As with all risk assessments, their completion will involve appropriate involvement and feedback from those likely to be affected.

ii. **General Safety/Welfare of Employees**

Heads of Departments / Line Managers must take reasonable precautions to satisfy themselves that there are no known medical problems with employees that would put the employee at risk when working alone. For example, it may be appropriate for Occupational Health checks to be completed to enable this judgement. Health screening may be required at the pre-employment stage and possibly health surveillance on a routine basis. This will be determined by the risk assessment.

The risk assessment will also determine if the employee needs to be familiar with basic first aid techniques. This process will assess the need for lone worker access to first aid facilities and whether an employee needs to carry a simple first aid kit if working off site.

Any employee who works alone must be familiar with both the work location and any established emergency procedures (e.g. evacuation procedures). An important aspect for lone workers is to know who to contact at a particular time of day if an emergency arises.

The risk assessment should determine whether any particular employee information (e.g. vehicle registration; emergency contact number etc.) may be useful in an emergency.

Particular duties, such as unavoidable electrical work at or near exposed live conductors will always require the presence of others. Once again, the risk assessment will inform the precautions taken.

iii. ***Risk of Fire***

It is important to have well signed exits for emergency situations. Employees working alone require safe access / egress from premises where they are directed to work. They need to receive regular information about fire evacuation and emergency procedures within premises where they are working. In the event of a fire the employees must know who to report to and, if working completely alone, how they will be accounted for by other responsible employees.

Employees working away from their normal base need to familiarise themselves with relevant fire procedures. When working in the home of a service user, employees need to be aware of potential significant fire hazards.

iv. ***Security***

Any risk of violence needs to be identified and foreseeable risks minimised or controlled. For example, in some cases panic buttons may be fitted in a particular fixed location, or employees given personal attack alarms or mobile telephones. Instructions and appropriate equipment will be in place, if necessary, for the lone worker to make contact with others. Employees back at the work base must be made aware of the appropriate action to be taken if procedures are not completed. Heads of Department / Line Managers must have basic details such as vehicle details to assist in any search.

Where an employee is working alone with a member of the public, then the risk assessment may conclude that training on handling aggression is appropriate. Training may also be provided so employees are confident about how to escape from potentially violent situations. Particular attention should be given to significant lone working issues arising from such natural factors as gender, health, age, or disability.

v. **Training**

Initial induction training, provided by the Head of Department or Line Manager, is particularly important for lone working so that the employees concerned are confident about the health and safety arrangements and have a good understanding of the main elements of the job. In this way, employees may avoid panic reactions in unusual situations, and will be sufficiently experienced to fully understand the risks and precautions. It is also important that employees know the limits of their responsibility so that they know when to stop work and seek advice.

In high risk situations (e.g. sewer entry; excavations) an emergency rescue plan must be prepared. This rescue plan may require liaison with the Emergency Services.

vi. **Communication and Monitoring**

Heads of Department are required to complete a risk assessment of lone working situations both for those established roles and new roles being developed. These assessments must be periodically reviewed and updated in conjunction with the job holder, other relevant employees and appropriate elected health & safety representatives.

A copy of the assessment needs to be retained by the Head of Department or Line Manager and they will also decide if any alterations are required. This assessment should be reviewed and amended (if necessary) with the job holder as part of normal performance discussions and at other times if organisational factors change. Procedures need to be in place to review on a regular basis the role and work undertaken in connection with lone working.

Heads of Departments / Line Managers need to monitor the effectiveness and safety of existing lone working arrangements at least annually and review and amend the risk assessment in the light of significant change. Any untoward incidents must be reported and dealt with in the normal way using the Council accident/incident report pro forma.

3. Summary

It is the responsibility of each Head of Department and every Line Manager to provide for the health and safety of his/her employees by ensuring that suitable precautions are put in place for any lone working situation.

Equally, an employee who works alone has responsibilities to act in a safe manner and report any untoward occurrences or obvious hazards to their manager so that appropriate action is taken.

Appendix 1

GUIDANCE NOTES

LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT

This note provides guidance for those completing the Lone Working Risk Assessment Form.

STAGE ONE: Hazard Identification (pages 8 & 9)

It is important that two frequently used terms are defined from the outset:

HAZARD - *something with the potential to cause harm*

RISK - *the likelihood that the harm will occur and how severe the outcome may be*

Some generic hazards have been identified on this sheet. The risk assessor /risk assessment group should consider these generic hazards. There is space on page eight to consider any other/additional hazards specific to the lone working activity.

If any of the hazards are identified as '**YES**' or '**UNSURE**' then you will need to complete **STAGES TWO & THREE** of the assessment (page 9).

Some guidance on the generic hazards:

Workplace: Identify hazards specific to the workplace/environment, which may create particular risks for lone worker (e.g. remote areas, laboratories, workshops, confined spaces. Consider access requirements, transport and parking arrangements etc).

Process: Identify hazards specific to the work process, which may create particular risks for lone worker (e.g. work on electrical systems, chemicals, work in the community).

Equipment: Identify equipment hazards specific to the work process, which may create particular risks for lone worker (e.g. manual handling, operation of essential/emergency controls).

Violence: Identify the potential risk of violence. Is there a history of violence or threats to employees?

Work Pattern: Consider the lone worker's work pattern and how it relates to those of other workers, in terms of both time and geography (e.g. Does an employee work out of normal office hours? Does the employee have to work in a community environment known to pose operational challenges?)

Individual: Identify hazards specific to the individual, which may create particular risks for lone worker (e.g. medical conditions, disabilities, gender issues, new or expectant mothers, age, inexperience etc).

Other: Specify any additional hazards, particular to the lone working.

STAGE TWO: Recording & Detailing Existing Risk Control Strategies

Persons at Risk (page 10)

Identify the level and extent of training required, taking into account the nature of the lone working activity. Consider the knowledge and experience of individuals, particularly young and new worker. A lone worker must be given information to deal with normal everyday situations, but should also understand when and where to seek guidance or assistance from others (e.g. unusual or threatening situations etc).

Training (page 10)

Identify the level and extent of training required, taking into account the nature of the lone working activity. Consider the knowledge and experience of individuals, particularly young and new worker. A lone worker needs to be given information to deal with normal everyday situations, but should also understand when and where to seek guidance or assistance from others (e.g. unusual or threatening situations etc).

Supervision

The extent of supervision required will depend upon the level of risks involved and the ability and experience of the lone worker. A few examples of supervisory measures, which may be useful in some circumstances, include:

- Periodic telephone contact with lone worker.
- Periodic site visits to lone worker.
- Regular contact (telephone, radio etc)
- Automatic warning devices (e.g. motion sensors etc)
- Manual warning devices (e.g. panic alarms etc)
- End of task/shift contact (i.e. returning keys).

Additional Information

Identify any additional information relevant to the lone worker, including emergency procedures, out-of-hours contact details, first aid provisions etc.

STAGE THREE: Recording of Assessment Details (pages 11-14)

Take those listed generic hazards and any additional hazards that have been identified as posing risks on sheets 7 & 8. Identify existing precautions and assess the remaining or 'residual risk'. (c.f. Appendix 3 on page 15). Decide what further actions are considered necessary. Record who will do this, by when and whether the further action has been completed or not.

It is important to maintain records of risk assessments for inspection and audit. The risk assessment must be shared and communicated to the employee involved in the lone working situation. The generic assessment should also be shared with elected health & safety representatives.

A recommended management practice would be to ensure that the individual employee signs to confirm that they have read and agreed the information contained in the risk assessment. In some circumstances a lone work procedure may need to be communicated to other employees for it to be effective. Again it would be sound management practice to create a record of employee

understanding of the process. This process needs to be implemented at the discretion of each Department.

Appendix 2

RISK ASSESSMENTS -1 ACTIVITY TYPE:

DEPARTMENT :
RISK ASSESSMENT GROUP: (name/designation)
NAME OF ASSESSOR:
DATE:

REF.NO.	HAZARD	DO RISKS EXIST?		
		YES	NO	UN-SURE
	Generic Hazards <i>* Explanatory note for assessor</i>			
1	WORKPLACE: *Do any hazards specific to the workplace/environment create particular risks for lone worker (e.g. confined spaces)?			
2	PROCESS: *Do any hazards specific to the work process create particular risks for lone workers (e.g. electrical systems)?			
3	EQUIPMENT: *Are there any hazards specific to the work equipment that may create particular risks for lone worker (e.g. manual handling)?			
4	THREAT OF VIOLENCE: *Is there a potential risk of violence being directed at the employee?			
5	WORK PATTERN: *Does the lone worker's work pattern present hazards, particularly in terms of both time and geography?			
6	INDIVIDUAL: *Are there hazards specific to the individual that may create particular risks for lone workers (e.g. medical condition, gender, age, inexperience etc)?			
7	TRAINING NEEDS: *Does a hazard exist as a result of lack of appropriate training?			
8	SUPERVISION: * Is there a hazard to			

	the employee from insufficient monitoring?			
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To record additional issues please use the following sheet entitled "ADDITIONAL HAZARDS"

REF.NO.	HAZARD ADDITIONAL HAZARDS (if any)	DO RISKS EXIST?		
		YES	NO	UN-SURE

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LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

RISK ASSESSMENTS - 2

ASSESSORS NAME: (Please PRINT)	DATE:	REVIEW DATE:	PERSON(S) AT RISK:	SIGNATURE:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WORK ACTIVITY(IES):	
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INDICATE TRAINING PROVIDED TO THIS WORKER(S)(generic or specialist) Has the necessary level of information, instruction and training been provided?	HOW WILL THE ACTIVITY BE SUPERVISED & MONITORED? Is suitable supervision in place?
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Identify any additional information relevant to the lone working activity, including emergency procedures & first aid provision?

HAZARDS/ REFERENCE NO.	PRECAUTIONS/PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ALREADY IN PLACE (e.g. alternative work methods, training, supervision, protective equipment).	RESIDUAL RISK	WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS REQUIRED? (e.g. further training, supervision, work methods, equipment ?)	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	DONE ✓
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HAZARDS/ REFERENCE NO.	PRECAUTIONS/PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ALREADY IN PLACE (e.g. alternative work methods, training, supervision, protective equipment).	RESIDUAL RISK	WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS REQUIRED? (e.g. further training, supervision, work methods, equipment ?)	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	DONE ✓
<p>Equipment:</p> <p>Violence:</p> <p>Work Pattern:</p>						

HAZARDS/ REFERENCE NO.	PRECAUTIONS/PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ALREADY IN PLACE (e.g. alternative work methods, training, supervision, protective equipment).	RESIDUAL RISK	WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS REQUIRED? (e.g. further training, supervision, work methods, equipment ?)	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	DONE ✓
Individual:						
Other Hazards:						

HAZARDS/ REFERENCE NO.	PRECAUTIONS/PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ALREADY IN PLACE (e.g. alternative work methods, training, supervision, protective equipment).	RESIDUAL RISK	WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS REQUIRED? (e.g. further training, supervision, work methods, equipment ?)	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	DONE ✓

Appendix 3

Residual Risk – Risk Matrix

Consequence (or severity)	<i>Very likely</i>	<i>Likely</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>
<i>Fatality or Major Injury</i> <i>(death or incapacitating injury)</i>	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM
<i>Minor injury</i> <i>(neither 'major' nor 'no injury')</i>	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW
<i>No injury or negligible injuries</i> <i>(cut, graze, bruise etc)</i>	LOW	LOW	LOW