



# LONE WORKING PROCEDURE

---

**Corporate Health and Safety**

**H+S P012**

**Author:** Corporate Health and Safety  
**Version:** V1.0  
**Date:** 28 May 2021

# Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Definitions.....	3
3.	Prohibited lone working situations .....	3
4.	Training .....	4
5.	Risk assessment .....	4
6.	Control measures .....	5
7.	Special situations .....	6
8.	Agile working .....	7
9.	Service directorate and team considerations.....	7
10.	Lone working systems .....	8
11.	Escalation process .....	8
12.	Reporting incidents.....	9
13.	Precautions to take when conducting patrols or visits .....	9
14.	Precautions to take when working in buildings .....	9
15.	Additional information .....	10
16.	Revision history .....	10

## 1. Introduction

This procedure forms part of BCP Council's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy. Lone working does not automatically imply a higher risk, but it does increase your vulnerability. We have lone workers in a wide range of situations, covering both fixed locations and mobile working, including those:

- working alone in premises such as kiosks
- working separately from others in premises such as receptionists
- working on their own outside of normal hours such as cleaners and security officers
- working alone as mobile workers away from a fixed base which includes seafront, parks and maintenance colleagues
- visiting premises such as environmental health officers, social workers and housing officers

This procedure will apply to those above and their managers. In some cases, a local procedure may need to be produced.

There is no specific legislation for lone working and working alone is not in itself against the law. Applicable legislation includes the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. These require us to appropriately assess and manage any health and safety risks to you working alone.

## 2. Definitions

CCS	Cautionary Contact System, a register of individuals or buildings which may pose a risk to you and the required precautions to be taken
Lone worker	Someone who works by themselves without close contact with a colleague or direct supervision
Lone working device	Item which allows for communication with a monitoring centre which will escalate calls or concerns for a lone worker's welfare

## 3. Prohibited lone working situations

Some tasks are too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by a lone worker and require at least one other person to be present for all or part of the time. As such lone working is prohibited in the following activities:

- electrical work on or near live equipment
- entry into derelict or dilapidated buildings
- moving and handling, such as hoisting persons, where care plans or risk assessments dictate that more than one person is required
- transporting someone who has a known history of volatile unpredictable behaviour
- visiting service users with a known history of violence or aggressive behaviour
- working in a confined space
- situations or locations where violence or aggressive behaviour is reasonably foreseeable

It is recognised that in some roles, such as Civil Enforcement Officers and Social Workers, it may be difficult to avoid a prohibited lone working situation. This should be by exception only and not the norm. Where these scenarios cannot be avoided then you must undertake a robust risk assessment to ensure that all available control measures are put in place to ensure the safety of the lone worker.

## 4. Training

Your line manager is responsible for ensuring that you, as a lone worker, are provided with and attend training on lone working. This may include formal role based training or more general training such as conflict management and dealing with violence and aggressive behaviour. You must receive training in the use of equipment and technology such as alarm systems that you need to use. This must include lone working systems and devices. The training should cover:

- when and how to use them
- charging
- emergency situations
- the escalation process

If your service directorate does not offer specific training or if you need clarification on the training that you should receive then contact Corporate Health and Safety for assistance.

## 5. Risk assessment

Line managers must conduct a risk assessment of each lone working activity, specific to individual roles, referring to P001 Risk Assessment Procedure.

When carrying out a risk assessment it must firstly be decided if lone working is appropriate. Remember that the activities covered in [section 3 Prohibited lone working situations](#) should not be carried out by a lone worker.

In consultation with the lone worker you should consider any potential risks. As well as everyday hazards, other hazards that lone workers may be exposed to that need to be considered include:

- ability to summon assistance if there is an accident or emergency, including sudden illness
- animal attacks
- availability and suitability of first aid equipment
- availability and suitability of communication and lone working devices
- driving and vehicle breakdowns
- exposure to hazardous materials or substances
- fire and explosion
- history of incidents or site problems, either with the area or the person being visited
- manual handling
- parking arrangements
- poor illumination
- provision of rest, hygiene and welfare facilities
- remoteness of the location
- risk of unpredictable situations
- risk of violence or aggressive behaviour from clients and other members of the public
- severe weather conditions
- social isolation and stress
- specific risk from the workplace such as temporary access equipment, working on the highway, working on cliff tops or working near water
- theft and intruders
- time of day
- use of tools and machinery
- visiting an unknown workplace or area

It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that all identified control measures are in place and that the lone workers are confident in their application and use prior to starting lone working. Once a suitable risk assessment has been completed, a lone working system and local procedure should be implemented. Recommended options are provided in [section 10](#) Lone working systems.

It may be necessary for the lone worker to conduct an "on the job" dynamic risk assessment. It is done in addition to the comprehensive formal risk assessment. In some cases, it is not always possible to identify all hazards relating to a role where the working environment is outside of our control as situations that have not been covered by the formal risk assessment may develop.

## 6. Control measures

The following is not a comprehensive list but rather a guide to some control measures that may be taken to specifically reduce the risk when lone working:

Access to communications	Immediate access is needed to summon help whether by telephone, alarm system or radio. The risk assessment must identify the type given the nature of the environment, signal coverage and distance from support.
Alarms such as fixed panic alarm	Managers must ensure colleagues understand where alarms are located, when and how to activate them and the response required to assist a colleague who has activated the alarm. Ensure the alarms are maintained and periodically tested in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.
Automatic warning devices	Similar to alarms, these summon assistance. They are usually a pendant or device carried by someone which is triggered by sudden movement or period of inactivity. They are sometimes referred to as a man down device.
Coded phrase	By using a code word or phrase to warn colleagues that a situation is escalating, it acts as a signal for help without alerting the service user or member of the public. The recipient of the call must be fully aware of the arrangements for taking these calls.
Communication devices	Colleagues are responsible for ensuring that lone working devices, mobile telephones, radios and other forms of communication are fully charged, switched on and that any problems are reported promptly. Never assume that everything is fine if the lone worker has not made contact.
First aid equipment	A first aid kit with suitable training may be necessary for those working away from immediate first aid assistance.
Periodic supervisory checks	For people working alone, a periodic visit or telephone call can give support and reduce feelings of isolation.
Records of visits	It is imperative that people visiting clients or customers at their home address, or anyone away from their main base, have a procedure in place for recording visit times and an estimated time of return. The line manager must ensure that there is a procedure in place to locate the person if needed.

Regular team contact	Maintain regular contact to discuss health and safety or other issues that may arise as a result of working alone or at home.
Safe systems of work	Line managers will ensure that safe systems of work are identified through the risk assessment process, devised and implemented as required to take into account lone working.
Security	In some circumstances, it may be necessary to employ security personnel to provide additional assistance.
Training	Risk assessments and safe systems of work may require training to be carried out to ensure that colleagues are competent in the use of equipment and technology. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that all colleagues are attend suitable training, for example dealing with violence and aggression and conflict management. See <a href="#">P002 Violence and Threatening Behaviour Procedure</a> for managing this risk.
Up to date information	Maintain up to date accurate records such as clients details, the CCS, location information, emergency contact numbers, maps for outdoor areas and meeting points. Colleagues must be aware of the location of these records.
Visit planning	Time must always be made available for planning. Everyone has a duty to check if there is a risk. Check records such as the client history, case notes and the CCS before visiting any clients or service users. If necessary, to avoid putting yourself at risk, organise alternative arrangements such as meeting in a controlled environment such as council premises.
Working in pairs	In some situations, it may be decided that two colleagues must attend site together. If your colleague fails to turn up, then you must contact your line manager before proceeding any further.

## 7. Special situations

Some colleagues may be more at risk when lone working. They can include those newly appointed, new to the area or inexperienced. Young people (those under 18 years of age) and those who have a medical condition or disability may also be at more risk. Others may be more vulnerable at certain times, for example when recovering from an illness or injury, when pregnant or when under stress arising from family or other difficulties.

Line managers are responsible for identifying colleagues in such circumstances and working with them to ensure that they receive any special help or facilities that they may need. Where extra help is required, you must ensure that your line manager is aware.

For colleagues working in offices of other organisations, such as hospital trusts, you are responsible for knowing about any special arrangements they have. This includes health and safety rules, risk assessments and their control measures, use of interview rooms, alarm systems, restrictions on access and out of hours working arrangements. It must be clear as to which set of procedures you are to follow, and they must be communicated to all relevant colleagues.

## 8. Agile working

Although working from home and agile working is usually assessed as low risk, we still have a duty of care to ensure that these lone workers are safe. Anyone working from home or agile working must have an agreed method of contact to notify a nominated person of their wellbeing at the beginning and end of every working day. Measures should be in place to ensure that personal information relating to colleagues such as home addresses and telephone numbers is not given out to members of the public.

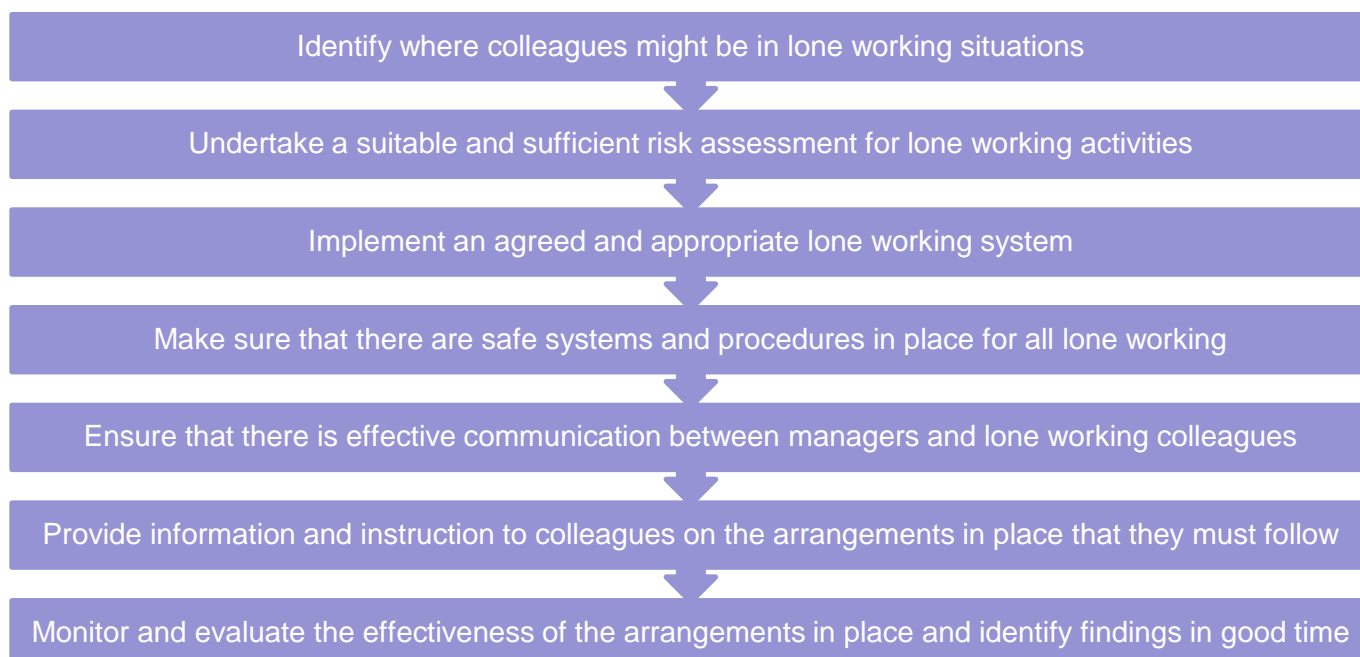
If you are working from home, other than as part of low risk office functions, then there will need to be an appropriately completed risk assessment and management agreement.

## 9. Service directorate and team considerations

All service directorates must ensure that:

- appropriately skilled persons undertake lone working risk assessments
- role specific lone working risk assessments are carried out
- robust emergency and escalation procedures are in place that cover all hours worked
- responsibilities are clearly defined, agreed and understood
- lone workers have sufficient knowledge of the hazards and risks they are being exposed to and the risk control measures being used
- colleagues know what to do if they believe they are or will imminently be at high risk of harm
- where the risk assessment identifies the need, a nominated person is aware of a lone worker's location and activity
- this procedure is applied at all locations, including those not perceived to pose a risk
- lone workers and those with responsibility for them receive appropriate training
- where premises are shared with other organisations, that they work together where appropriate to implement lone working systems
- the effectiveness of the lone working arrangements, including the use of any lone working devices, is monitored and action taken where necessary

Each team should follow the flowchart below:





## 10. Lone working systems

As we recognise that we have a diverse workforce there are several lone working systems which can be used. The needs of each team may be different so your risk assessment should identify which system is the most suitable in each situation. It is suggested that at least one of the following options is adopted:

- calendar system or whiteboard
- buddy system – an arrangement where two colleagues accept responsibility for each other's safety by checking on each other and instigating the emergency procedure if necessary
- lone worker service: a check in and check out monitoring service which relies on the lone worker calling the telecare and out of hours team, entering an allocated PIN and leaving a message with their whereabouts and expected timing using a mobile telephone
- radio network
- lone working device provider: Oysta
- lone working device provider: Peoplesafe

Our corporate contracts with the lone working device providers expire soon. Oysta is a legacy arrangement whilst Peoplesafe is our current preferred lone working device provider. A review will be undertaken to establish the most appropriate supplier and devices going forwards. Under no circumstances should colleagues contact the suppliers direct to initiate a contract for devices for a longer or new term. Until a new corporate arrangement is in place details on the lone working devices are for information only. The lone worker service may also change following the review.

The adoption of any system must be in conjunction with this procedure and any associated risk assessments. You will need to regularly monitor your chosen systems for effectiveness and to confirm that the risk is being mitigated. The lone worker service and the lone working devices involve costs which teams need to budget for.

Some teams use other role specific lone working systems such as vehicle trackers, iPads using real time job planners and body worn cameras. In these cases, you must ensure that your local procedures and risk assessments reflect their use. If using a lone working device, then it should not be used as a tracking device for any other purpose other than for lone worker safety.

More information on the systems can be found in G012a Lone Working Systems Guidance.

## 11. Escalation process

An escalation process is needed if someone does not return from a visit or has gone missing. It is essential that contact details remain up to date.

When setting up an escalation process you need to establish beforehand the timings and steps of the process. Each step should be followed in order. A typical escalation process would be:

- continue to try to contact the person, for example by telephone or radio
- contact any other people with whom the person was working with or visiting
- contact the person's line manager
- have at least two people visit the last known location of the missing person
- check with the person's emergency contacts

If you have tried all other options without any success, then the police will need to be alerted. They may ask for vehicle details, proposed route, locations being visited and expected times.



## 12. Reporting incidents

Lone working incidents and concerns must be reported to your line manager as soon as possible. Incidents also need to be recorded in our [Incident Reporting System](#).

Depending on the nature of the incident they may also need reporting to the Police. For incidents of violence or threatening behaviour you should consider if they should be added to the CCS to safeguard others.

## 13. Precautions to take when conducting patrols or visits

There are many things that you can do to help yourself to reduce risks. Some are role specific but there are general rules that you should follow when working alone if possible, which include:

- planning ahead, including your route
- making sure that you know where you are going and how to get there
- ensuring someone always knows where you are, how you are getting there, how long you will be and what you are doing
- keeping your lone working device and a mobile telephone on you when working alone, ensuring that they are fully charged
- parking your vehicle in a well-lit area
- parking where possible in the direction of travel on leaving
- when walking sticking to busy well-lit streets whenever possible avoiding danger spots like quiet or badly lit alleyways, subways or isolated car parks
- staying alert, keeping your mind on your surroundings, especially if you are wearing headphones, using a mobile telephone or carrying equipment such as a laptop
- being prepared to activate any devices such as body cameras
- avoid keeping valuables all in one place such as your wallet and keys
- keeping yourself between the exit and the person that you are visiting or meeting
- be aware of the nearest exit and how to open doors
- always assessing the situation
- be alert and trust your instincts – if you feel uncomfortable, get out immediately
- be aware of what to do in an emergency
- never assume that it will not happen to you

## 14. Precautions to take when working in buildings

If possible when working in a building, there should always be at least two people present. The following should be applied where possible:

- liaise with other colleagues to see who else is working in the building and until what time
- ensure your manager has given you permission and knows the times you intend to work
- if you are leaving late, try to move your car nearer the building during daylight hours
- be alert for unfamiliar people when you approach a building, if unsure go to a place of safety until another colleague arrives
- if there are signs of a broken window or forced entry assume that someone may be on the premises – go to a safe place, telephone the Police and inform your line manager
- when working late or if you feel unsafe then keep the exit doors locked, ensuring that you can still quickly exit the building in the event of a fire
- do not open the door to anyone without checking their identify and purpose of the visit
- if you see someone acting suspiciously outside, stay inside and telephone the Police
- when leaving liaise with other colleagues who are still in the building and sign out if required

- if possible, tell someone at home that you are leaving and your expected arrival time
- on leaving ensure that doors are secure and that if required alarm systems are activated
- if you are being collected by car, wait inside until it arrives
- if using public transport, try not to leave the workplace too early to avoid waiting too long

## 15. Additional information

G0012 Lone Working Systems Guidance covers some of the main lone working systems that we have in use. This guidance document should be consulted when deciding on the control measures for lone working.

Contact [Corporate Health and Safety](#) for any further information.

## 16. Revision history

Version Number	Review Date	Amendments Made
V1.0	28-May-2021	New BCP Council document