

# LONE WORKING

What you need to know

## WHAT IS THIS FACTSHEET ABOUT?

As someone who works alone, you face the same hazards in your daily work as other workers, but the potential for harm is often greater due to the simple fact that you are alone or isolated.

This factsheet covers the potential risks you face and provides four simple techniques you can use to stay safe.

## WHO SHOULD READ THIS

This factsheet is designed for anyone who works alone. Put simply, you become a lone worker when you can't be seen or heard by another person whilst at work.

## LONE WORKING

Working alone, also known as lone working, means working by yourself without close or direct supervision.

Put simply, you become a lone worker when you can't be seen or heard by another person whilst at work.

It's important to recognise there is no set duration that establishes someone as a lone worker, and you can be a lone worker for any period of time.

## LONE WORKER HAZARDS

As someone who works alone, you face the same hazards in your daily work as other workers, but the potential for harm is often greater due to the simple fact that you are alone or isolated.

This is especially true in certain areas such as:

- Risks related to driving and commuting in any form.
- Violence and abuse from members of the public or the people you support.
- Sudden illness and medical emergency.
- Fire.
- Inadequate provision of rest, hygiene and welfare facilities.
- Theft and intruders.
- Effects of social isolation.
- Lack of supervision and training.

Whilst it is not illegal to work alone, your employer must carry out a risk assessment before you carry out any lone worker activity.

You also need to take responsibility for your own safety. Too often our own experiences over time result in an “It’ll never happen to me” attitude, and we master dangerous short cuts and take unnecessary risk.

Try to remember that the consequences of getting it wrong can be life changing.

## SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU

Yes, your employer has a responsibility to keep you safe, but safety starts with you.

So it’s important to consider how you can work as safely as possible when you’re alone.

This is called a dynamic risk assessment, and means that you need to make an operational decision based on risks that cannot always be foreseen.

To do this, make sure that you take extra care and ensure that you never put yourself in any unnecessary danger.

## LONE WORKER – SAFETY 4

When you have to work alone, remember these four simple techniques to stay safe.

### 1. STAY CONNECTED

Always carry a mobile phone with you when working alone.

### 2. COMMUNICATE

Let somebody, such as your supervisor, know where you are and what time you will be expected back.

### 3. USE A LONE WORKER ALARM

Make sure you utilise any lone working monitoring systems available to you, so you can raise an alert in the event of an emergency.

### 4. USE GOOD JUDGMENT

Assess and reassess situations to help yourself become aware of risks as early as possible.

## TAKEAWAY

If you don’t feel safe working alone, stop, and speak to your line manager, supervisor or safety representative.

Nothing you do is worth getting hurt for.