



—BELMATT—  
HEALTHCARE TRAINING

# Lone Worker

# Aims and Learning Outcomes

This session aims to explore safe practices when staff work on their own.

This session will highlight the importance of knowing:

- The risks of working on your own
- Responsibilities while working alone
- Legalities of working alone
- Ensuring safety while working
- Develop practical strategies for travelling

# Who is a lone worker?

Anybody who is:

- An employee (or volunteer), and
- Works without a colleague
- “An individual working without close or direct supervision”
- “Someone who works away from the building alone”
- “Anyone who works out of earshot or sight of another colleague”

# What are the risks?

Lone Working – is NOT the risk but it can increase the likelihood and or severity of the following:

- Violence and Aggression
- Road Traffic Incidents when travelling long distance/late/early
- Illness/medical emergency
- Slips, trips, falls (from height)
- Manual handling injuries
- Electrocution

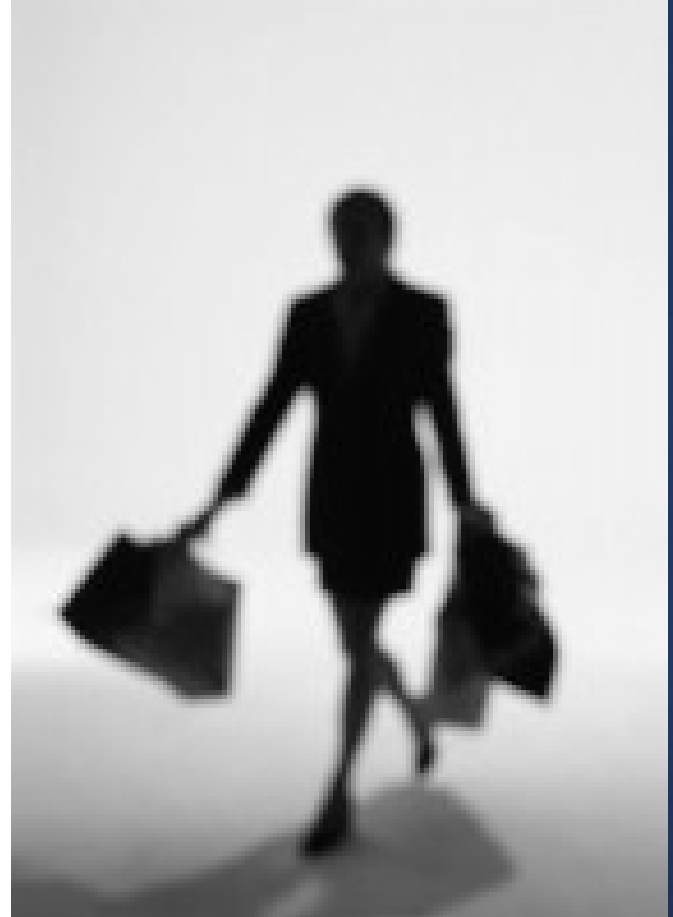
# Employers are responsible for

- The health, safety and welfare at work for their employees and those affected by the work
- Assess risks to lone workers
- Take steps to avoid or control risk where necessary



# Employees are responsible for

- Taking reasonable care of themselves, and other people who may be affected by their work
- Co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations



# Who are Lone Workers?

- Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision
- No clear definition of 'lone worker' but there are a large number of occupations that "lone work". Eg's :-Doctors, district nurses, milkmen, salesmen, postmen, meter readers, maintenance workers, lorry drivers etc

# Can People Legally Work Alone?

- Legislation does not prohibit lone working, but the duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply
- These require:
  - Identifying the hazards of the work
  - Assessing the risks involved and who is at risk
  - Implementing measures to AVOID or CONTROL the risk and documenting the assessment





# Identifying the Hazards

- Talk to the people involved as they are a valuable source of information and advice. Find out exactly what is involved to carryout the task, eg:-
  - Does the workplace present a special hazard?
  - Is the access to, or exit from the workplace safe?
  - Is the lighting and ventilation sufficient?
  - Will other adjacent processes & activities present a risk?
  - Is any equipment to be used safe & regularly maintained?
  - What risks would the worker be exposed to?

# Safe Working Arrangements

- Lone workers face particular problems. Some of the issues which need special attention when planning safe working arrangements are as follows:-

# Safe Working Arrangements

## – The Individual

Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

- Check that the worker has no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone.
- See medical advice if necessary.
- Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the worker.



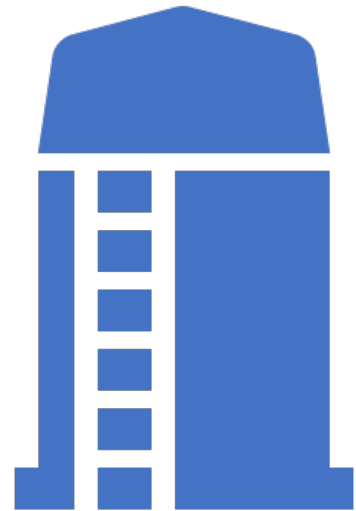
# Safe Working Arrangements – training / competency requirements

Lone workers need to:

- be sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks and controls,
- know the set limits of what can and cannot be done whilst working alone,
- deal with situations which are new, unusual or unexpected and to know when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor,
- avoid panic in unusual situations,
- know how to handle aggression.

# Safe Working Arrangement s – Supervision

- Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still an employer's duty to ensure their health and safety at work. Supervision can help to ensure:-
  - Employees understand the risk associated with their work.
  - That necessary safety precautions are carried out.
  - Guidance is provided in situations of uncertainty.



# Lone Worker Checklist

- Do I need to go?
- Is there a risk assessment for the task and do I have a copy?
- Have I told someone of my intended movements?
- Have I means of communication?
- Have I thought through my own 'what if' plan?
- Do I feel confident to go?
- Does the workplace present a special hazard?
- Is the access to, or exit from, the workplace safe?
- Is the lighting and ventilation sufficient?
- Is equipment safe and regularly maintained?



# Lone Worker Checklist

- Will other adjacent processes & activities present a risk?
- What risks will I be exposed to in the event of equipment failure?
- Can I handle substances and goods safely?
- Do I have the appropriate PPE and have I been trained in its use?
- Have I been trained to do the task correctly?
- Have I demonstrated my ability to do the task satisfactorily?
- Am I medically fit to undertake the task?
- Have I sufficient information about the job, equipment or substances?

# Guidance for lone working

## **Consider the following statements: -**

- My colleagues will know where to start looking should I not return to base on time.
- If I decide to change my plans during the day someone would be aware of this.
- There is a clear procedure to follow in case someone does not return at the expected time.
- There is a system to raise the alarm covertly in case of an emergency while working alone.
- I am confident that an appropriate person will pick up the phone if I call the office in an emergency.



# Are You Covered?

- When (if) I am lone working out of office hours, there is a system to monitor my safety.
- There is information available so that my line manager could contact my partner/family (to ensure my safety) should I fail to return from an appointment/
- My partner/family have contact details of a colleague should I fail to return from work, even out of normal working hours.

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# Practical Strategies for Travelling -

**PREPARATION** – Plan your journey, your route, take a personal alarm, contingency plans, etc.

**LOOK CONFIDENT** – Confident body language means you are less likely to run into trouble.

**AWARENESS** – Be aware of your surroundings and be alert to your body responses to situation.

**NEVER ASSUME** .....

# Lone Worker Checklist



Carry out informal inspections of the workplace and access on a regular basis to make sure it is safe, and that people are working safely.



Ask yourself would you feel working there?



How will I communicate with the worker to ensure their well being?



Check equipment is being maintained correctly & records kept.



Ensure CoSHH assessments are available for all substances used and stored on the premises.



Ensure risk assessments of all processes and activities are available for workers to refer to and the that Safe Working Procedures are available.



Ensure your workers are fully aware of local rules, especially those related to working out of normal business hours.

# Useful Pointers For Lone Workers

## Ensure

Ensure someone knows where you are and establish a contact system so that you can tell someone when you're at work and when you're leaving.

## Don't do

Don't do anything which you feel might put you in danger – report any dangerous incident or situation to your supervisor and seek advice.

## Do

Don't 'cut corners' or rush the work, set yourself a reasonable target and work towards it.

# Useful Pointers For Lone Workers

If you start to feel tired either stop for a short break, take a walk outside in the fresh air, or go home after contacting your supervisor and/or signing out.

Ensure you know and follow, relevant safe working procedures and guidelines for operating equipment and handling and using substances.

If you don't know how to do something – don't do it – leave it until someone is around to help you.

# Home Visits & Meeting the Public

- Be fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence?
- Be briefed about the areas where they work, or will work?
- Be made aware of attitudes, traits or mannerisms that can annoy clients?
- Be given all available information about the client
- Leave an itinerary with a colleague?
- Keep in contact with colleagues?
- Ensure colleagues have the means to contact you?
- The relevant telephone numbers?
- A sound grasp of your organisation's preventative strategy?
- Authority to arrange an accompanied visit, security escort, or use of a taxi?

# Home Visits & Meeting the Public

Carry forms for reporting incidents, including violence or threats of violence?

Understand the importance of previewing cases?

Appreciate the need for this procedure and use it?

Know your attitude to premature termination of interviews?

Know how to control and defuse potentially violent situations?

Appreciate their responsibility for their own safety?

Understand the provisions for support by your organisation?

# Conclusion

Greet clients politely and with eye contact.

Be aware of body language, signs of anger, tension, stress, etc.

Avoid invading other people's personal space or touching them.

If attacked your voice is your best defence, shout a positive command or yell loudly to 'Stop'.

Have a mobile phone for emergencies but keep it secure and out of sight with a number pre-programmed for emergency use.

Procedures for call-in should be in place together with those for non-arrival.

If using car parks in busy areas, use ones which are well lit at night.

Don't leave anything visible in the car. Lock all doors.

Trust your intuition, if the situation feels unsafe, or you feel uneasy – use a plausible excuse and leave.