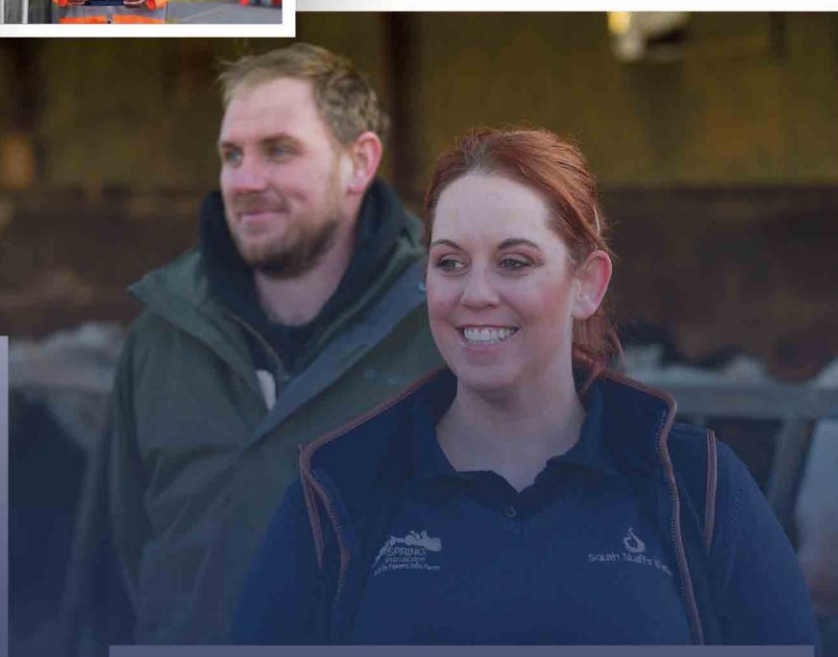




South Staffordshire Plc



Lone Working

Last updated: January 2025

 STAYING SAFE TOGETHER.

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Scope

This standard applies to the management of Lone Working for SSPlc companies and its employees. Each business must maintain their own business specific management systems for lone working but must align to the minimum standards detailed in this standard.

Purpose

This standard sets the framework for mitigating risks associated with lone working, encompassing varying factors such as location, the nature of tasks, and potential interactions with others. Our controls are designed to align with these risks, ensuring the well-being of our lone workers.

Summary

This document outlines SSPlc's policy for creating a safe working environment for all employees who work alone, regardless of their working hours or environment. While this policy aims to be comprehensive, it is essential to acknowledge that it cannot account for every possible scenario that may arise within the working environment. Technology can contribute to the protection of lone workers; however, its effectiveness is greater when it is supported by:

- **Effective Risk Assessment:** Both managers and staff must engage in thorough risk assessment processes to identify and mitigate potential hazards.
- **Robust Management Procedures:** Clear and robust management procedures must be established to proactively address identified and potential risks and effectively manage incidents when they occur.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Managers and staff should accept responsibility for and support the use of systems, procedures, and technology designed to enhance their protection.
- **Information Sharing:** It is vital to foster the sharing of information within and outside the organisation regarding identified and potential risks.
- **Comprehensive Training:** Quality training is crucial, whether it's aimed at helping staff prevent and manage violent situations or effectively use security and safety procedures, systems, or devices provided for their protection.

Every employer and employee bears rights and responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) (1974), which mandates the provision of a secure working environment supported by safe working systems. Further information and guidance regarding this legislation can be obtained at [Lone working - HSE](#) and INDG73: [Protecting lone workers](#)

What is a lone worker?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines a lone worker as "someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision". This includes those who always work alone or those who may only carry out specific tasks alone.

Lone workers are subject to increased risk because they do not have a colleague with them to help should an incident occur. An incident could be a result of social risks such as violence or aggression, or environmental risks such as slips, trips and falls. However, according to HSE, working alone is completely legal and will often be safe. The level of control must be determined by the risk, for example travelling alone when commuting between sites is generally low risk and will not need the same controls as, traveling to and from field and temporary sites, which could be higher risk. Same for those who work from home, the

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controls in place will be different to those who work alone in the field as the risks posed are different. Any controls must be based on the risks that are present.

It's particularly important not to overlook lone workers who:

- Work in the community with members of the public.
- Travel during work hours.
- Work on the same site or in the same building as their colleagues but cannot always be seen or heard by any of them.
- Work late and are therefore the last to remain in the workplace.
- Work in busy populated areas e.g. city centres or stadiums.

The controls for the above may differ from the traditional lone working roles, for example access to a mobile may be sufficient, but this must be based on risk assessment.

Compliance and responsibilities

Manager and employer responsibilities

Managers are accountable for conducting team-specific lone worker risk assessments, reviewing them regularly, and sharing them with employees, including those working from home. Individual ones may be required where those within the team face unique risks e.g. those with health conditions such as heart conditions or epilepsy.

If risk assessment identifies the need for a lone working device, or mobile application, managers must:

- Provide lone working devices or mobile application to relevant employees under their supervision.
- Ensure training is provided
- Ensure proper use and wear of the device/app by these employees.
- Mandate device/app usage when working alone.
- Review and monitor

Where working locations indicate a history of high-risk, or recorded events:

- Attend the location with a colleague.
- Wear the lone worker device, even if not technically working alone.
- Conduct a dynamic risk assessment and respond accordingly, including device activation if necessary.
- Attend in daylight hours only.
- Avoid carrying valuables.

Employee responsibility

Employees working alone must:

(When a risk assessment identifies a need)

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- Be responsible for their own safety while working alone, including regular dynamic risk assessments and appropriate responses.
- Notify a manager or colleague when they know they're going to be working alone or in a high-risk environment.
- Ensure someone is always aware of where they're going and how long they're expected to be there.
- Always inform a manager or colleague if they plan to deviate from their usual working pattern.
- Familiarise themselves with operational control measures.
- Ensure their mobile phones and lone worker safety devices are charged, functional, and always accessible.
- Report work-related incidents of violence, assault, abuse or accidents to their immediate Line Manager and/or the Health and Safety team (including near misses).

Dynamic risk assessment and risk management

Integral to prevention is the ability to assess each unique situation as it arises. This assessment serves as a cornerstone for refining procedures and determining the appropriate equipment needed for safe progression. Identified risks must promptly be reported to Line Managers to initiate risk management actions. Risk management involves practical measures aimed at safeguarding staff from potential harm and distress.

Following an assessment, if a staff member believes that their own or a colleague's personal safety is at risk or could be compromised, they should not attempt to negotiate the situation but instead prioritise their safety by removing themselves from the situation. Line Managers should be promptly notified, and the circumstances carefully reviewed. Initially, these concerns may be reported verbally, but it is crucial to follow up with a formal report as soon as practicable.

Associated risks

Travelling for work

When traveling for work alone, it's important to be aware of potential risks and follow established procedures to ensure your safety. Controls should match the level of risk.

Travelling to unsafe areas: if you are required to travel to an area known for safety concerns or high crime rates, make sure to:

- Notify your manager or a designated contact of your travel plans, including your departure and estimated arrival times.
- Ensure your mobile phone and lone worker device/app is fully charged and easily accessible.
- Avoid displaying valuable items or personal information that may make you a target.
- Use well-lit and populated routes, when possible, especially during late hours, and darker months

Confrontation or Harassment: If you encounter harassment or confrontational behaviour:

- Raise the alarm
- Avoid escalating the situation or engaging with the individual(s) involved.
- Quickly leave the area and go to a place of safety.

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Public Transportation: When using public transportation for work-related commuting or travel:

- Be aware of your surroundings and any suspicious behaviour.
- Sit in well-lit and populated areas of the vehicle or station.
- Keep personal belongings secure and within your sight.

Alarm monitoring

For those who have a lone worker device or app, to ensure maximum safety it will be connected to an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Key requirements for these devices/apps and the ARC include:

- The device/app must enable discreet activation of an alarm, quickly notifying the ARC.
- The ARC must be capable of remotely assessing situations and requesting assistance based on incoming information (e.g. requesting police assistance).
- An escalation process should be established for cases requiring further clarification.
- The alarm should not be cancelled until the safety of the employee is confirmed.
- The device/app must include a "person down" feature.
- Specific instructions for using the device/app and expectations from the ARC will support this policy.

Key holders and last person to leave

There is the chance that at some point they may be on site alone. Some of the most common scenarios:

- Overtime - employees may be working overtime.
- Maintenance - building maintenance may be being carried out.
- Critical operations - the business may also require someone to be on site at all times to oversee critical functions.
- Employees with keys who are first on site, or last to leave. Certain employees may be tasked with holding keys to the premises and have responsibility for unlocking and locking up the site.
- Employees who need to attend out of hours to deal with alarms. Team members may also be responsible for holding keys and attending the site in the case of an alarm or other emergencies (such as a burst pipe) that occur out of hours.

Consider both 'normal' working arrangement and any foreseeable emergencies that may come up, such as fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Use your risk assessment to help you decide on the right level of supervision. If the role involves high-risk activities, then suggested controls include:

- make sure at least one other person is present.
- Have clear procedures outlined and provide adequate training for any emergency situations that may arise.
- Ensure workers have access to first-aid kits and training.
- Ensure keyholders don't enter a premises if there are any signs of forced entry.
- The keyholder should never challenge intruders.
- Light the business premises for extra security.

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Appendix - Safety Tips and Practical Advice for Lone Workers

Lone workers are subject to increased risk because there are no colleagues available to help should an incident occur. This is why, we must all act to keep out lone workers safe. Here are our top tips:

General Safety

1. **Communicate:** Make sure a colleague or family member knows what time you're expected at work and what time you're due home so they can raise an alarm if you don't turn up.
2. **Be prepared:** Ensure you are appropriately prepared for unpredictable weather conditions e.g. carry a torch when it's dark, wear warm clothing in winter.
3. **Use a safety device or app:** Use a personal safety device or mobile app to ensure you can quickly call for help in an emergency.
4. **Display ICE details:** Save In Case of Emergency contact details to your phone under "ICE". You could also display ICE details on your lock screen.
5. **Report incidents:** Report any incidents to the police using 101 or use 999 for emergencies.

Travel Safety

1. **Have a plan:** If you're travelling between locations, make sure you've planned your route and think about any potential risks. You should also make sure you're fully aware of your organisation's health and safety policies and procedures – they're there to keep you safe.
2. **Use well-lit routes:** If you're walking or cycling, stick to well-lit, popular routes even if they take longer and make sure you have appropriate reflective clothing for when it's dark.
3. **Stay near to others:** When travelling by public transport, it can sometimes be tempting to sit in the quietest spot. Sit in a place where there are other people around and know where the exits are.
4. **Park wisely:** Always try to park in a well-lit, accessible area, have your keys to hand when returning to your car and lock your car doors once inside
5. **Know where you are:** Download an app such as what3words to your phone to ensure you can always pinpoint and communicate your exact location.

Behavioural Safety

1. **Trust your instincts:** Remember your dynamic risk assessments and trust your instincts. If you feel uneasy about entering a building or carrying out a specific task, there's probably a valid reason why. Either remove yourself from the situation or ensure you have support available should something happen.
2. **Watch and listen:** It's important to always be aware of what's going on around you. Try to avoid wearing headphones or walking along while looking at your phone. If you identify a potential risk early, you can take steps to avoid it.
3. **Stay alert when meeting people alone:** If you're meeting someone alone, particularly if you haven't met them before or they're known to be high-risk, make sure someone knows where you are and place yourself between them and the door. This will give you an easier exit route if you need it.
4. **Be theft aware:** Try to avoid carrying valuables with you. If you do need to carry valuables, make sure they're stored out of sight and if someone tries to grab your bag or your mobile phone, just let it go. Your safety is more important.
5. **Slow down:** We all rush to get things done which can result in an increased risk of slips, trips, falls, car accidents or substandard dynamic risk assessments. Slow down and contact a colleague if you're struggling.

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