

LONE WORKING POLICY

RCT are wholly committed to ensuring the safety of their staff at all times and have the following procedures in place for staff who are required to work by themselves, away from the office in the execution of their work role. Staff are provided with full training; guidance and a copy of the following procedures that they should adhere to at all times. In addition, staff undertaking lone working as part of their duties are issued with personal alarms and an Automated Lone Working System that is connected to an independent company who initiate a police response should they deem the worker to be in danger. Training in the use of such equipment is provided to staff.

The following procedures should be fully adhered to by any staff undertaking lone working as part of their work role for RCT. Such staff should familiarise themselves with the contents of this guidance to ensure safe working practices and to minimise the risks identified regarding lone working.

1. Introduction

Many employees are required to work on their own as part of their job. RCT will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety. Solitary working exposes staff and others to certain hazards. It is RCT's intention to either remove the risks from these hazards or, where elimination is not possible, to reduce them to an acceptable level. The persons responsible for the implementation of this policy are Project Managers. The co-operation of Senior Management and Employees is essential to its success.

Assessment of the risks of working alone in a particular area or to complete a certain task should be carried out by the Project Manager to identify whether the work can safely be carried out by one unaccompanied person. This will include the identification of all associated potential hazards. Particular consideration should be given to: -

- The remoteness or isolation of the workplace
- Any problems of communication, such as being out of mobile phone range
- The possibility of interference such as violence or criminal activity from other persons
- The nature and extent of injury or damage to health anticipated in 'worst case' scenarios

Staff must be given all necessary information, instruction and training to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate risks involved with working alone. Staff will be required to follow the safe working procedures adopted which will include the provision of first aid, communication procedures and awareness of emergency procedures and to report any concerns to the Project Manager.

2. Safe Systems of Work

RCT have developed robust Health and Safety Systems and Procedures in respect of safe systems of work, to cover emergency and accident procedures and office systems. However, when staff are required to work alone the following specifics should be considered: -

- a) Required ability of staff

- Professional training
- Experience
- Medical fitness/physical capability

b) Suitability of equipment provided

c) Means of communication

- Use of Automated Lone Working System
- Mobile Telephone
- Remote or manual alarm systems
- Regular visits by competent persons

d) Provision for treatment of injuries/illness

- Availability of first aid kit
- Access to first aider

e) Emergency and accident procedures

- Means of summoning help
- Means of raising alarm
- Rescue plans and equipment
- Fire-fighting equipment

f) Training for safe use of specialised equipment

g) Supervision for new members of staff, who must be confirmed as being competent to work alone before supervision can be relaxed to occasional visits

h) Defined working limits. Clear procedures should be established as to the limit of what can and cannot be done. Clearly this cannot be defined in general terms, but the general precautionary principle of 'if in doubt ask your line manager' should always be observed.

3. Staff Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for informing their line manager of any concerns about working alone. All staff must comply with any advice, procedures or working practice introduced to minimise the risks identified regarding working alone. This includes utilising the designated lone working system in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions whenever staff are working alone.

4 Summary

Working alone is not illegal, but it can bring additional risks to a work activity. RCT has developed policies and procedures to control risk and protect staff, and all staff should familiarise themselves with them and follow them. Apart from staff being sure that they are capable of doing their own job on their own, the three most important factors to be certain of are:

a) The lone worker has full knowledge of the hazards and risk to which they may be exposed

- b) The lone worker knows what to do if something goes wrong
- c) The Automated Lone Worker System is being utilised so that someone knows the whereabouts of the worker at all times and the length of time the worker will be working alone for

5. Lone Working Guidance

Working alone can bring additional risks and will require additional assessment and may require special preventative measures which should be recorded. Risk Assessments and precautionary measures should take account of:

- Agreeing reporting lines whilst on site
- Monitoring use of automated lone worker system
- Access to telephones or provision of mobiles phones
- Provision of personal attack alarms
- Weekend working and emergency contact arrangements, particularly key holders
- Explaining risk assessments and protection measures
- Medical conditions which might make a person unsuitable for lone working
- Providing details of first aid arrangements and medical assistance
- Guidance and training where violence to staff is possible
- Providing and implementing safe systems of work
- Agreeing arrangements for the provision and use of work equipment
- Assessment of manual handling activities and suitable training

Whether or not a person is allowed to work alone out of normal hours depends upon both the degree of risk posed by the work and the individual. The risk involved in staying behind in the office is likely to be greater from intruders than from a personal accident. Consideration should be given to the experience and training given to the individual as well as considering their health. Training should concentrate on safe person aspects. Special arrangements might need to be made for establishing a person's safe return home as well as for security reasons.

Assessment of the risks of working alone will confirm whether one unaccompanied person can actually do the work safely and precautionary measures should be based on the hazards to which the worker is exposed. This will apply not only to undertaking the task itself, but also the general situation such as remoteness of the base or place visited, the employee's mode of travel, any potential communications problems and the likely weather conditions for example.

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still the employer's duty to provide appropriate controls of the work activity. The extent of supervision is a management decision and will vary dependent upon the risk involved and the experience and proficiency of the member of staff to identify and handle safety issues. It should not be left for the individuals to decide on a course of action and have to ask for assistance.

Staff new to the job may need to be accompanied during their 'induction period' since it is likely that they will be required to make decisions on site without reference to their line manager or deal with situations which are new to them and may present special risks.

6. Guidance relating to Interviews at the Office

The following points are listed as basic precautions to observe:

- Where possible work to an appointment system
- If there are any concerns before or during the interviews two members of staff must be present
- If a panic button or alarm is activated, staff nearby must render assistance first and then call the relevant authorities if other staff are not available to do this
- Look after yourself as first priority – it may be necessary to leave the room
- Avoid keeping people waiting but if unavoidable keep them informed of the situation
- Make sure the area is welcoming and friendly. Invite persons to sit down
- Keep between the participant/interviewee and the exit door
- Remove or secure freestanding items that could be used as missiles
- When interviews are in progress make other staff aware so that they can carry out regular checks on the situation
- Use strategies taught on violence prevention courses
- If persons to be interviewed appear drunk, angry or exceptionally agitated do not conduct the interview
- Interview rooms must be vacated if members of the public use threatening or violent behaviour
- Note any problems you have had on the file after an interview

7. Checklist for Manager's of staff conducting Home and Site Visits

Are your staff who visit:

- a) fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence
- b) briefed about the area where they work, including traditions etc.
- c) given all available information about the participant from all relevant agencies

Have they:

- a) understood the importance of previewing information
- b) left an itinerary
- c) aware of emergency system and how to use it
- d) made plans to keep in contact with colleagues
- e) got an emergency phone number and means to contact you
- f) a sound understanding of the organisation's preventative strategy
- g) authority to arrange an accompanied visit or use of taxis

Do they:

- a) have access to incident forms
- b) appreciate the need for the procedure
- c) use the forms
- d) know your attitude to premature termination of an interview
- e) appreciate their responsibility for their own safety
- f) understand the provision for their support by the organisation

8. Checklist for Staff visiting Participants or Sites

Have you

- Had adequate training on the subject of violence and aggression
- A sound understanding of the relevant procedures
- A clear idea about the area into which you are going
- Carefully previewed the participants file beforehand
- Asked to 'double up' take an escort or use a taxi if unsure
- Made an appointment
- Left your itinerary and expected departure/arrival times
- Left details of your itinerary with the operators of the Emergency system
- Told colleagues, manager about possible changes to plans
- Arrange for contact if your return is overdue

Do you carry

- A personal alarm, automated lone working system, mobile phone and a torch.

Are they charged?

Do they work?

Is it handy?

9. Review Schedule:

The Lone Working Policy is formally reviewed on an annual basis.

Date of last review: August 2023

Reviewed by: Lizl Donnelly

Job Role: Business Support Manager

Date of next Review: August 2024