

POLICY: LONE WORKING

PURPOSE: Melbourn Parish Council (hereafter ‘the Council’) recognises that its employees are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working.

SCOPE: The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the Council’s paid employees. Lone Working risks are broadly divided into (a) risk of violence or threat to the person and (b) risk of accidents to the person that affects personal health and safety.

Note: The Council also recognises it has an obligation under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act) and the Management of Health & Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1999, for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees.

POLICY:

1. Definition

1.1 The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”. This covers all of the Council’s employees: the Clerk the Assistant Clerk’s and two Village Wardens, all of whom are required to carry out their duties for all or part of their working day working in isolation.

2. Aims

The aims of the policy are to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and on-going way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff in all areas that equip them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.
- Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Clerk to the Council

The Clerk to the Council is the Line Manager for the implementation of this Policy for all staff reporting to them. If the Clerk undertakes Lone Working

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he/she is also responsible for personal compliance to this Policy. The Clerk should seek support from the Chair to the Council to ensure compliance to this Policy.

The implementation of Lone Working Policy will include:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working.
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of this policy.
- Ensuring that all staff members are aware of the policy.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice that are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone.
- Ensuring that staff members are given appropriate information, instruction and training.
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

3.2 Employees

Employees have a personal responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others at all time, but particularly when involved in Lone Working. In order to minimise risk they should:

- Co-operate by following rules and procedures designed for safe working.
- Report all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Take part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.
- Report any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

4. Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management.

Assessment will be carried out for and by all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff members that are site based but work in isolation as well as mobile staff whose work takes them out into the community.

Recommendations will be made to eliminate or to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

A lone workers' checklist will be completed for each member of staff (See Appendix 1). This will be used as a tool to identify if the existing control measures are adequate and if not, what modifications or additional actions can be considered necessary to help reduce the risks associated with lone working.

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Once the checklist has been completed a risk assessment will be carried out and documented in a risk assessment form.

Risk assessments for lone workers will include:

- Safe access and exit.
- Risk of violence.
- Safety of equipment for individual use.
- Channels of communication in an emergency.
- Working site security.
- Security arrangements i.e. alarm systems and response to personal alarms.
- Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.
- Risk assessments for mobile lone workers will, additionally, include, travelling between sites.
- Reporting and recording arrangements.

Following completion of the Risk Assessment, consideration will be given to any appropriate action that is required. Risk Assessments should be considered on an individual employee basis, as personal and gender differences may affect the results. (See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2)

5. Incident Reporting

An incident is defined as “an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage”.

In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or ‘unsafe’ (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

6. Contacting or Involving the Police

The Council is committed to protecting staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All staff members are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process.

Except in cases of emergency, employees should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

7. Support for Staff

Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk, or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

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8. Immediate Support following a Violent Incident or Accident

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours the Council Chair should be contacted. The Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. The Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident. If the incident occurs to the Clerk, then the duties outlined will become those of the Council Chair.

Document Approval:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Clerk', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

(Chair to Melbourn Parish Council)

Date of Parish Council Meeting: 25 March 2019

Review - Annually

Appendix 1 – Employee Lone Working - Risk Checklist.

This checklist is to be completed in advance of formal risk assessment and findings used to supplement those factors listed in Section 4 above.

Checklist Completed by:

Date:

Employee Name:

Key Risk Factors

Please tick as appropriate

- Does individual ever work alone?
- Does individual often/always work alone?
- Does individual work outside normal office hours?
- Does individual have to travel to or from work in hours of darkness?
- Does individual routinely meet with members of the public in an isolated location?
- Is there enough security provision (e.g. if money is handled or in terms of general building access control)?
- Is there safe access to the building or working area?
- Does individual's activity involve working in confined spaces, e.g. a loft space with restricted or single access?
- Does individual's activities involve handling dangerous substances, heavy weights or moving/sharp or mechanically driven equipment?
- Does individual carry out work in high-risk locations (i.e. areas with known crime or traffic high density/speed)?
- Does individual ever/routinely carry out work in isolated areas?

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Appendix 2 – Employee Lone Working - Risk Mitigation

There follows a list of control factors that should be considered in minimising the risks of Lone Working. These should be used when carrying out a separate formal Risk Assessment. It is recommended that formal Risk Assessments be carried out for individual Employees, as each person may bring both strengths (e.g. equipment skills) that tend to reduce risks, and also weaknesses (e.g. a physical disability such as impaired vision) that increase certain risks.

- Is it possible to prevent lone working by reorganising working patterns, especially for high-risk activities (i.e. in confined spaces, high risk areas and with dangerous substances)?
- Does the individual carry personal factors that influence risk either positively or negatively?
- Can one carry out regular supervisor or colleague checks during activities?
- In a building work setting, can entrance security systems be effectively used?
- Is there security lighting around building access points and parking areas?
- Is it appropriate to install panic buttons?
- Does individual have information and training on basic personal safety?
- Has safety instruction been carried out and training recorded on hazardous materials and equipment?
- Can individuals be trained in strategies for preventing and managing violence?
- Do individuals have access to forms for reporting incidents or near misses and appreciate the need for this procedure?
- Are individuals encouraged to speak when there are concerns about safety?
- Does the Council seek or share risk information with other local government bodies?
- Does the line manager have systems for monitoring staff whereabouts and movements for regularly reporting to base, e.g. through job and location tracking or the issue of mobile phones?
- Is the issue of personal attack alarms worth considering?