Lone Working Policy: guide for employees

This guide explains how the Lone Working Policy keeps you safe at work.

The following guide forms part of the standard for workforce policies. These policies apply to all eligible staff within NHS Scotland, regardless of the board they are employed by. The guide covers:

What is the purpose of the Lone Working Policy?

This Lone Working Policy provides a safety framework for anyone who works alone. Its aims are to:

- raise awareness of the safety issues related to lone working
- support staff who work by themselves
- assess and manage all associated risks
- encourage full reporting of any incidents
- reduce injuries and incidents for all lone workers

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to everyone working within NHS Scotland. That includes all employees, plus bank, agency, and sessional workers, volunteers, contractors, and anyone on placement, such as students or trainees.

Employee responsibilities

Your safety is a shared responsibility. As an employee, you must:

- Take care of your own safety when working alone.
- Follow the rules and all safe working procedures.
- Report everything—Inform your manager about all incidents, risks, and near misses.
- Take part in all training designed to keep you safe.
- Speak up—Report any hazards or concerns you have about working alone.

Assessing risk

Risk assessments are essential for your safety. Your manager is responsible for carrying out a risk assessment for any situation where you work alone. It will take into account both normal and foreseeable issues.

It's important that you take part in this process, as your experience and knowledge of the role are vital for identifying all potential risks. Your manager will review the assessment regularly and will always share the results with you.

Download Combined risk assessment form.

Managing risk

When potential risks are identified, your manager must reduce them to the lowest possible level.

They will look at your specific situation, using a person-centred approach, to decide on the best course of action. If appropriate control measures are identified, you're expected to work with your manager to help put these safety measures in place.

Control measures in place, and safe systems of work

Your manager will check how effective existing control measures are and if they need to be reviewed.

Issues that will be considered include:

- Joint working with others for high-risk activities.
- Security arrangements in buildings.
- Security lighting in parking areas.
- Using checking-in and monitoring systems.
- Communication systems for sharing information on risk with colleagues in other disciplines and agencies.
- Using personal protective equipment or mobile phones and personal alarms.

If a risk assessment shows it's not safe for you to work alone, your manager must make other arrangements.

Your manager will make sure you have:

- guidance on assessing risks yourself
- clear instructions on when to stop work and get advice
- procedures to follow in an incident or emergency

Monitoring and review

Staying in touch with your manager is essential to your safety when working alone. You and your manager must have clear procedures in place for monitoring. These may include:

- Contacting your manager at pre-agreed times.

- Responding to periodic check-in calls or messages.
- Using lone worker technology like apps or alarms.
- Confirming you have returned home or to base safely after your work is done.

Lone working procedures are reviewed regularly and whenever there are significant changes. This is to make sure they continue to protect you when you may need to work alone.

Reporting and recording

As an employee, you must report all incidents, including near misses, to your manager as soon as possible. These should be reported on the appropriate system, and your manager should investigate all reports.

Useful links

- [HSE Guidance 'Working alone, Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working' 03/20 INDG73 (rev4)](#)
- [Combined risk assessment](#)