



LONE WORKING POLICY

Medic Now

Lone working policy

Definition

“Any situation in which someone works without a colleague nearby or when someone is working out of sight or earshot of another colleague.”

NHS Protect (2014)

Some roles within healthcare mean that workers may be alone in the community seeing patients within the community or visiting patients their own home. Lone workers can be more vulnerable to physical and verbal abuse.

Lone workers

Lone working staff have a responsibility to do all they can to ensure their own safety and that of their colleagues. This is in line with current health and safety legislation and they should:

- Undertake all relevant training including conflict resolution training before entering a lone worker situation
 - Seek advice from their line manager, action guidance, procedures and instruction to avoid putting themselves or their colleagues at risk
 - Should conduct proper planning prior to a visit/event and utilise continual dynamic risk assessment
 - Be aware that staff should never put themselves or their colleagues at risk and if they feel at risk they should withdraw immediately and seek further advice or assistance
 - Should report all incidents even where they consider it to be a minor incident, including ‘near misses’ to enable appropriate follow up action to be taken
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Identification of risks

Risk assessment is the process of making sure that the most serious workplace risks are managed a careful examination of anything in the workplace that could cause people to suffer injury or ill health. The local site should ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken to identify risks in relation to lone working.

It is the responsibility of each individual worker to ensure that they are aware of the risks and plans, and that local recommendations are followed.

In the event of an incident

Managing the immediate risk

In some cases it may be pertinent for a worker to refuse care to a patient they feel that they are at risk from. Each individual situation will need assessment and workers should discuss with their local line manager for further advice. In some cases it may still be possible to provide care.

Most community based lone working establishments will have a way of raising an alarm, whether via mobile telephone or some other form of alarm. Where this has been issued, all workers must ensure they have this with them at all times and understand how to raise the alarm.

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Reporting

Workers should report all incidents via the local site's procedure for the Reporting of Incidents and Near Misses including RIDDOR.

This will also ensure that any lessons learned can be fed back into risk management processes to make sure similar incidents do not recur and further preventive measures can be developed.

Post incident support

Incidents that occur in lone working situations have a direct impact on workers and can be stressful.

In the first instance the local line managers may provide support to any worker that has been subject to an incident. Workers are also advised to contact the Clinical Advisory Team at Medic Now, CASupport@yourworld.com who can provide additional support.

Training

All workers receive lone working training as part of their mandatory training. In addition, we recommend workers keep up to date with [RCN guidance on prioritising personal safety](#).