



The term "Lone Worker" is used to describe any worker who is working remotely and without direct supervision. A Worker could be considered a lone worker at any time when their regular duties require them to work where they cannot be seen or heard by another person, they cannot expect a visit from another worker or member of the public during the ordinary course of their work, and where assistance is not readily available. Working alone is not always hazardous, but it can be when other circumstances are present. Whether a situation is higher or lower risk depends on the location, the type of work being completed, the potential likelihood and consequences of an incident, and the response time and ability of an emergency responder if an incident were to occur. This wide variety of circumstances makes it essential to assess each situation individually.

Lone Worker Supervision and Communication

The level of supervision required for lone work depends on the job's risk (risk = severity and probability of an incident), the abilities of the person responsible, and their willingness to support safety and health objectives. The hazard assessment process should provide a clear road map for making

management decisions on a case-by-case basis. The most critical safety plan for lone workers revolves around communication. Open communication between lone workers and their supervisor permits the supervisor to stay aware of lone workers' activities, hazards, and changes in work conditions.

Procedures for monitoring and effective means of communication should be established for each task or activity involving lone working.

All lone workers (including those working off-site) must have a suitable means of maintaining contact with managers, supervisors, or other workers (e.g., a two-way radio).

Check-in procedures should be in place to ensure that a lone worker has returned to their base or home once the lone working task or activity has been completed.

If lone workers work outside of regular business hours, a monitoring procedure should be in place to ensure their safety.

All lone working equipment (e.g., radios and communication systems) must be checked to ensure it is in good working order.

Methods to Control Lone Worker Risk

Avoid having lone workers whenever possible.

Assess the hazards of the workplace.

Engineer out lone work hazards that pose a high risk of severe injuries and fatalities.

Ensure that lone workers are trained.

Establish a check-in procedure. Maintain regular contact with all workers. Establish ways to account for people (visually or verbally) while they are working.

Schedule higher-risk tasks during regular business hours or when another worker can help in an emergency.

Ensure access to first aid equipment.

Emergency Alerting

In an emergency, lone workers require a quick and easy way to let their supervisor know that they are in potential danger and may require assistance. An emergency alerting system for a lone worker should ensure that the following are adequately addressed:

The supervisor can receive emergency alerts from the lone worker.

Method, tools, or equipment that will transmit emergency alerts to the supervisor.

Actions are necessary if an emergency alert is transmitted by a lone worker.

Pre-planning for emergency assistance to respond to a lone worker.

A backup communication plan should be implemented in case the primary supervisor does not receive the alert.

Scenarios Where Lone Working Should Be Prohibited

There are scenarios where lone working should be prohibited, including working in, near, or above water and subsurface clearance work. In addition, lone work should also be avoided when:

Working at heights.

Working in confined spaces.

Working with electricity or other forms of hazardous energy.

Severe weather conditions arise or are forecasted.

Chemical exposure could incapacitate a worker.

Hazardous equipment (e.g., chainsaws) is used.

In public places where the potential for violence is present.

Although maintaining communication is the most critical responsibility for a lone worker, knowing when to stop work and responding to changes in the job or environment is also essential.