



Lone Worker Procedures

Lone Worker Procedures

The purpose of the Lone Worker Procedure document is to give guidance on the arrangements for the reduction of risk to employees who complete some work alone.

To be classed as a lone worker, does not mean that the person has to be working in complete isolation all of the time. In the college situation it is guidance provided for staff who may find themselves undertaking work alone at certain times for specific reasons.

It is vitally important that work undertaken by a lone worker is risk assessed.

A lone worker may be at greater risk than other employees who work together. Control measures should take account of normal working conditions for that task, the person who will be carrying out that task, any foreseeable emergency situation and the possible effects of any pre-existing medical conditions or disability. The risk involved in lone working must be reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable or making the decision to stop that activity.

In the college context the majority of lone working may be in visiting a student's home to speak with parents. In this case it is important that the member of staff speaks with the Pastoral Deputy for Student Support. To make sure confidential information is checked and any potential risk is reduced.

In the interests of personal health and safety it is important that all staff follow the procedures laid down and ensure that all visits are closed off safely. In the event of any problems the emergency procedures should be followed immediately.

Lone Worker Responsibility

- In as many cases as possible a member of staff should not arrange meetings outside the workplace without another adult being present. If a lone visit is to be made all information should be left with main reception (a second copy to be left in attendance office for visits to be completed by attendance staff).
- To log all visits with main reception between 8.45am and 4.30pm.
- Any visits arranged whilst out of college must be phoned in via the lone worker and information left with attendance and main reception.
- Mobile phone number of lone worker should be left with main reception and the phone must be kept switched on at all times.
- Panic alarms must be taken on any visit which is undertaken alone. These can be collected at main reception.
- Staff undertaking lone visits must use the college password if they get into a difficult situation and need assistance. (Password should be obtained from main reception before leaving).
- Visits should not be undertaken outside the normal working day. If a visit is necessary this must be authorised by the headteacher.
- In case of emergency the headteacher should be informed immediately.
- At the end of all visits it is the lone workers responsibility to inform main reception that visits are complete and no problems have occurred.

Emergency Procedure

If no contact can be made with a lone worker or the password is given the police will be informed.

IT IS VITAL THAT PHONE CONTACT IS AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES – AND THE PHONE IS ALWAYS SWITCHED ON.

Personal Safety at Work

Introduction

Risks at work do not exist just at your desk or workspace. Risks may also arise when travelling to and from work or in connection with work, particularly where members of staff both live and work in the same area.

Whilst your employer has a duty to assess the risks which you face at work, you also have a duty to take reasonable care of yourself and others including colleagues, contractors, visitors and members of the public. You should therefore aim to conduct your own assessment of the risks to your personal

safety that you face in connection with your work. Some of the factors you might consider will include the time of day, where you are going, numbers of people about you and then you will need to consider the precautions you are going to take to reduce the risks which you face. Some of these are suggested in these guidance notes. Probably the most important factor to be considered is how well you know yourself and your reactions to particular situations.

Actions to take

In deciding the actions to take when faced with personal safety issues such as violence and aggression you should **ARM** yourself to deal with the problem.

A Avoidance

R Risk reduction

M Managing the residual risks

Avoidance

- Never assume that it will not happen to you;
- Avoidance is a strength not a weakness;
- Be observant and aware of the situation around you;
- Trust your intuition – if you feel concerned, act on that concern;
- Look confident – do not give the impression that you are a potential victim but conversely you should not give an impression of overconfidence – a potential aggressor may decide you need bringing back to earth with a bump!
- Avoid physical confrontation – talking is easier than fighting;
- Plan ahead – your journey, your destination, your activities, other people.

Risk Reduction

- Learn how to deal with difficult situations, develop your communication skills and assertiveness through both personal experience and training;
- Know yourself and your reaction to these difficult situations;
- Have the confidence to respond positively through your knowledge and training;
- Communication will greatly reduce the risk of aggressive or violent behaviour;
- Communication is more body language than verbal skills (by up to 90%);
- Continually review the plan you made and adapt it to the changing situations you face;
- Do not give out your home address, telephone number or other personal details at any time;
- Consider the appropriateness of your clothing and footwear for the tasks or activities which you are to undertake. Will it hinder you if you have to get away from a potentially dangerous situation or if you have to defend yourself?
- Reduce the number of times when you put yourself at risk by not planning after-hours meetings and other work activities or, if this is essential, by taking specific extra precautions to cover those occasions;
- Wherever possible home visits should be undertaken with another adult present.

Managing the Residual Risks

When you face potential or actual aggression it is important to understand yourself, the fears you are experiencing and the actions you are going to take to defuse the situation.

- Stay calm, breathe deeply, speak clearly and do not raise your voice;
- Do not try to outsmart the person verbally;
- Watch the body language of both yourself and your aggressor and act upon the messages which are received;
- Maintain sufficient space between you and the aggressor so that you avoid being struck or kicked;
- Talk through the problem where possible;
- Offer the aggressor alternatives for a successful outcome but allow them to make the final decision themselves;
- Allow aggression to be diverted to inanimate objects such as table or other furniture;
- Whilst talking continually reassess the situation and plan your escape if it becomes worse;
- Do not allow the aggressor to block your exit routes;

- Never turn your back on a potential aggressor;
- If you are losing control of the situation then remove yourself from it;
- In the event of a physical assault you need to remove yourself from the situation as quickly as possible;
- If you cannot get away then shout or scream as loudly as possible – the aggressor will not want the attention of others brought to them and their actions. Other people are more likely to react if you give them a specific instruction to ‘call the police’ than a general cry for help;
- Do not rely on passers-by to assist you;
- If you have a personal alarm then use it to shock and disorientate your assailant and use the vital half-seconds this can create to make your getaway;
- After the event ensure that a full report is given to your supervisor or manager – this will help your recovery, assist in rationalising your own handling of the situation and allow others to learn from your experiences and thereby reduce further risk to yourself, your colleagues and others.

Remember – you should only use physical self-defence as a last resort. In doing so you will limit your opportunities for de-escalating the situation, and for making an effective escape from the situation. You must also remember that whilst you are permitted to use reasonable force to defend yourself; if you use that force then you may need to justify its use in a court of law.

Safer travel on foot

Travelling on foot is often the easiest and quickest way of getting around, especially in town. It is generally a safe mode of travel but the risks increase when it is dark.

- Think ahead, be alert and aware of your surroundings;
- Try to avoid walking alone at night or on dark afternoons;
- Keep to busy, well-lit roads and thoroughfares;
- Do not take short cuts;
- Where possible, avoid poorly lit or quiet underpasses;
- Walk facing oncoming traffic to avoid kerb crawlers;
- If you are walking in the same direction as the traffic and a driver stops then simply turn and walk the other way; the driver cannot follow;
- If a driver does stop, write down the registration of the car for future use – the driver will probably leave immediately;
- If you believe you are being followed then cross the road and keep walking. If you are still concerned then go to a shop, garage or other public place and ask for assistance;
- Do not wait around unless absolutely necessary. If you must wait, try to do so in well-lit, busy areas and look confident and positive;
- Never accept lifts unless you know and trust the driver – do not hitch lifts;
- Think carefully about cash, mobile telephones and other valuables. If you need to carry them – distribute them around your pockets of jackets and coats. Have some means of calling assistance such as cash or phone cards and remember they may have pinched your mobile!
- Keep your hands free to defend yourself;
- Carry an alarm but in your hand so that you can use it, not in your bag or briefcase;
- Do not switch off to the world by wearing a personal radio or stereo;
- Avoid areas where you know groups may gather, such as outside pubs and clubs.

Using Public Transport

- Always sit near the driver on a one-man operated bus or stay downstairs on a double-decker;
- Wait for the bus, if possible, at a busy stop that is well-lit or close to areas of activity such as shops or a petrol station;
- Have your fare ready in your hand or pocket so that you can enter the bus as quickly as possible;
- On trains, sit in an open compartment close to the alarm pull if you can – if not then consider changing carriage or at least note where the alarm pull is situated;
- In stations note where the exits are so that you can leave quickly and safely;
- Do not doze off on public transport – stay alert to your surroundings and the situation;
- If someone gets on to public transport about whom you have concerns then change position or carriages as soon as possible;
- Avoid travelling alone late at night on any form of public transport if at all possible;

- If travelling in a group at night consider who may be travelling alone at the end of the journey and the additional precautions that may be needed to protect them;

Using Private Cars

The following good practice guidelines apply no matter whether your vehicle is owned by you, leased, hired or provided for you.

- Keep the car in good working order, have it serviced regularly and keep it topped up with oil, fuel and water;
- If you hire the car ensure that it has been checked or check it yourself;
- Consider the need to carry extra fuel in an approved container;
- Consider membership of a motoring organisation or breakdown service;
- Make sure you have change or a card for a public telephone or a mobile phone for use in emergencies;
- Always have the necessary maps and directions so that you do not need to stop and ask for directions;
- Stay in the car as much as possible. Keep the doors locked and windows closed when you can, especially in towns when you need to stop at lights, pedestrian crossings etc;
- Keep handbags, briefcases and other valuables out of reach of open windows in care of snatch thieves;
- When leaving your car always lock equipment, luggage, valuables and other property in the boot. Leave nothing on display;
- Lock your car, even when paying for petrol on a garage forecourt;
- When you park in daylight, consider what the area will be like after dark;
- At night, park in a well-lit place and one that is busy, if possible;
- Before you get into your car check the back seat for intruders;
- If you see an accident or incident or someone tries to flag you down then do not stop without thinking about the consequences. Can you help? Would it be safer and of more use if you went for help or telephoned the emergency services;
- Avoid taking people in your car unless they are friends or well known to you;
- In the event of a breakdown pull off the road as far as you can;
- Do not leave children alone in the car;
- If someone offers to help then stay in the car with the doors locked and ask them to call the police or your motoring organisation;
- If you need to go to a telephone then note any road names or other landmarks such as public houses to assist in location of your vehicle;
- On the motorway drive or coast to the nearest emergency telephone and park as closely as possible;
- If you cannot drive any further then pull on to the hard shoulder with your front wheels pointing to the left and switch on your hazard lights;
- Leave the car by the passenger door and walk along the nearside verge to the nearest emergency telephone. Be aware of the traffic dangers and from objects falling from vehicles
- When using the emergency telephone stand behind the phone facing oncoming traffic so that you can see anyone approaching you;
- At all times make sure that the police or your motoring organisation is aware if you are a woman alone, or with children or a disabled person so that they may prioritise their response to you.

Personal Safety in Home Visits

The potential for violence against employees in other people's homes may depend on why the employee is there.

Whatever the reason for being in someone else's home the cardinal rule is to remember that it is their home, their territory and you are going into it. Under normal circumstances people are in control of their homes and what happens there: your presence may change that. People may feel that you are invading their space, taking away their power, imposing rules and regulations on them or taking over their lives. Consider how you would feel if that happened to you.

Whenever you need to go to another person's home in connection with your work the following points should be considered on each occasion:

- Do you have to go to another person's home? Could that person come to your offices or a neutral venue?
- Do you have to go alone to the other person's home? Consider taking a colleague with you if the visit may cause problems;
- Check the Student Information Logs before the visit to see if there is any record of violence connected with or close to the address you are visiting. Check with other colleagues for local knowledge;
- Before leaving the workplace make sure that you have booked out and someone knows your destination, your plans and your expected time of return or finishing. Ensure that your vehicle registration and description is known to your section;
- Make your visit in daylight where possible;
- Consider the location of the address. Is it at the top of a tower block, down a country lane or in a one-way street? Consider where you are going to park so that you can leave quickly if necessary. You may need to consider routes to the nearest public transport or a busy, well-lit place where you will be safe;
- At the person's home remember you are the visitor; say who you are, where you are from and show an identity card;
- Do not make assumptions:
 - Check who you are talking to – is it the person you have come to see;
 - Make sure you are expected or at least that it is understood why you are there;
 - Wait to be asked to enter or ask if you can go in;
 - Let the host lead the way, take your coat and invite you to sit down;
 - Introduce yourself to others present;
 - If you get an aggressive reception at the front door decide whether or not you should enter or leave your business till another day;
 - Take only what is essential to your call into the house;
 - Do not take in anything which you would not want the householder to see or read;
 - Do not spread your belongings about – if you have to leave quickly you will not be able to gather them together;
 - Take notice of your surroundings – if at all possible place yourself with a clear line to an exit;
 - Remain alert to changes in mood, movements or expressions;
 - Try to avoid reacting to the house itself – if it smells, is very untidy or dirty;
 - If you feel at risk then leave immediately;
 - If you are prevented from leaving then you will need to change your mind set to one of dealing with the situation or fighting back;
 - Do what you have to do to protect yourself but be prepared to justify your actions afterwards.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

This policy is updated and reviewed on a regular basis.