

Stoke Lodge and The Common Parish Council Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Lone workers are defined by the Health and Safety Executive as those people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.
- 1.2 There is no general prohibition on working alone, but sometimes the law stipulates that at least two people must be involved in the work and specifies the safe systems to be followed. There is no specific legal prohibition on working alone but the general duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation still apply. This requires a risk assessment to be carried out in order to identify the hazards of the work, assess the risks involved, and devise and implement a safe method of working.
- 1.3 The hazards that all workers face are increased when there is no one else to give a warning and no one else to help in the event of an incident. Emergency assistance is unavailable if required, and the risk of serious injury becomes more likely from, for example:-
- Tripping, slipping and falling;
 - Situations of known violence, aggression or threatening behaviour;
 - Out of office working during hours of darkness;
 - Inspections of remote locations;
- 1.4 **Never** work alone in the following situations:-
- Where the risks are unacceptable;
 - In confined spaces;
 - Over or near water;
 - On live electrical equipment;
 - Areas specifically designated as “no lone working.”
- 1.5 Wherever the risk assessment determines, avoid working alone in the following situations:-
- Known or potentially violent or threatening situations;
 - In remote locations;
 - In derelict or empty buildings;
 - In any hazardous environment, e.g. cliffs or confined spaces;
 - On live roads;
 - On roofs;
 - Using ladders which cannot be tied and require footing;
 - Near demolition work.

2. Planning the Work

- 2.1 There are a few criteria to be used in deciding whether an individual can safely undertake a task by working alone:-
- Is the workplace and access to it safe?
 - Does the task require more than one person (e.g. heavy lifting, inspection work involving the erection and moving of ladders?)
 - Are the risks such that it would not be safe for one person to undertake the work (e.g. meeting a potentially violent client, inspection of a derelict building or on a live highway?)
 - Does the individual have experience of the hazards and sufficient ability to undertake the work by him/herself?
 - Is there a risk of violence?
 - Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
 - Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

- 2.2 In general, working alone is not encouraged but each activity has to be considered in the light of the attendant risks. This safety procedure includes precautions to be taken when lone working is planned or could arise. The main aspects that these precautions cover are:-
- Awareness of any special hazards and how to deal with them;
 - Ability to act effectively if an emergency;
 - Arrangements to alert others of the need for action, if return is overdue.
- 2.3 Wherever possible, work should be undertaken by two or more persons when working away from the normal workplace. There may be occasions when it is possible for one employee to carry out the work. When this situation arises, the employee should remain, if possible, in sight of others who can summon help if required.
- 2.4 Is the person physically/mentally able to work alone? Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

3. Procedure for Working Alone

- 3.1 It is important to remember that if you have an accident when alone, the results may be far worse than if there was someone there to help you. It is therefore especially important that the whereabouts, intentions and expected periods of absence of everyone working out of the office or on site are known at all times to someone who can be relied upon to institute a search or contact the emergency services if overdue
- 3.2 Examples of precautions to be considered prior to staff working alone include:-
- Ascertain in advance if your destination is hazardous, and if so, in what respects:
 - Check if there are any particular rules or requirements that you should follow;
 - Devise and implement safe systems of work to ensure that the risks are eliminated or controlled. If in doubt, send two or more people;
 - Make sure any equipment can be safely handled by one person and also, ensure safe access and egress;
 - Know the location of telephones on or near the destination.
 - Ensure the member of staff has adequate protective clothing and equipment (particularly clothing to keep out rain and cold);
 - Take a torch, suitable for the work environment, if you expect to be out after dark or entering unlit areas;
 - Do not ask anyone to perform work they are not trained, equipped or prepared to perform safely.
- 3.3 The Parish Clerk should ensure awareness of the safety procedures in place, including the following points:
- **Do not** turn a “blind eye” to potential problems just to get information or “cut corners.”
 - **Do not** assume that people will wonder where you are. Ensure that they know.
 - **Do not** leave a work area in an unsecured manner.