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*[The Health & Safety Executive]*

## Do You Employ A Lone Worker..?

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) is often asked the question, "is it legal to work alone and is it safe?". The HSE concludes that "there is no single answer; it will depend on the findings of a risk assessment but often the answer will be yes".

The HSE suggests the following definition "Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. They are found in a wide range of situations".

This definition does not mean that an individual has to work an entire shift to qualify as a lone worker. It can apply to short periods in a shift, perhaps only 10 or 15 minutes, when people are working alone.



You don't have to be this alone to be a lone worker..!

### THE LEGAL POSITION

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees. The employer needs to know the law and standards that apply to their work activities and then assess whether people working alone can meet the requirements.

The **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974** (HSWA 1974) and **Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations** (MHSW 1996) apply. These require the employer to: -

"Devise and implement safe working arrangements to ensure that the risks are eliminated or adequately controlled"

Where it is not possible to devise arrangements for a person to work alone in safety then alternative arrangements providing help or back up have to be devised.

The employer should not require an employee to work alone unless:

Safe working arrangements have been devised

According to the HSE control measures may include;

*"Supervision and monitoring"*

A lone worker working away at another employer's workplace is still the responsibility of his/her own employer.

### MONITORING & SUPERVISION OF PEOPLE WORKING ALONE

Monitoring can help to ensure that employees are protected from the risks associated with working alone.

Procedures will need to be put in place to provide this monitoring of lone workers to see they remain safe.

These should include regular contact via check-calls between the lone worker and another party to a specific timed schedule with an implementation plan to be initiated should the lone worker fail to make contact as expected.

*Lone working can take place when people:*

*Work as individuals at a fixed site, e.g. in a shop or petrol station*

*Are separate from others, e.g. in warehouses or automated plants*

*Work away from their base or at remote locations, e.g. construction workers, maintenance, repair and cleaning workers*

*Work outside normal hours, e.g. cleaners or security staff*