

LAVERSTOCK AND FORD PARISH COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

Purpose/Principles	To set out a Code of Practice on safe working practices when alone
Scope	Employees
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Purpose of this policy and procedure

The Council recognises that some of our staff work alone, and where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers. This document:

- Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working,
- Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone,
- Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk,
- Provides appropriate support to lone workers, and,
- Encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

The scope of this policy

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers. It does not apply to Councillors.

Policy

We will protect staff from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the Council's policy is to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

Definition

'Lone Worker' refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples include:

- A person who opens and closes a hall either early in the morning or late at night
- An Operations Officer inspecting green spaces
- Office workers who work alone in the premises, and,
- Homeworkers.

Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces is not permitted to work on their own.

Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues. The key responsibilities are as follows:

Managers

- Will try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone;
- Ensure that all lone working activities must be formally risk assessed. This should identify the risk to lone workers; any control measures necessary to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures;

- Arrangements for lone working must be made clear to staff and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone explained;
- Lone workers must be informed of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and have the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment;
- Must raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated
- Must ensure that all staff are aware of this lone working policy and procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

Lone workers

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work
- To follow any instruction given by management or the council
- Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working
- Not to work alone where there is inadequate information to undertake a risk assessment.
- Inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone

Staff

- To be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication.
- Buddies should ensure they maintain and share up to date contact details (see below)

Risk Assessments

Managers must complete (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity and update as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or Councillors.

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness
- Faulty equipment
- Travelling alone
- Remote locations
- Abuse from members of the public
- Animal attacks

Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced

The three most common lone working environments for staff and Councillors in Laverstock and Ford Parish Council are visiting outdoor spaces for inspection purposes, working alone in an indoor space (office, home working) and driving.

We have risk assessed these, and other, activities and implemented reasonable mitigation measures. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary, appending any new version to this policy. Staff and Councillors should ensure they are fully apprised of its contents.

Our primary mitigation method is the use of a Buddy Scheme alongside a messaging app whereby staff notify one another of the start, end and location of lone working situations. Failure to notify the end of that situation should trigger an intervention either by the nominated work Buddy or the manager or the staff member's next of kin.

Buddy scheme

The following information should be written down and kept by the lone worker and their buddy, next of kin and manager (see the **Buddy Form**):-

- Name and contact details of the lone worker
- Name, relationship and contact details of the buddy
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's next of kin
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's manager
- Any 'code word' that would indicate that the lone worker needs assistance
- Note: All these details must be kept securely in line with data protection legislation

If you change your contact details, you must let your buddy and manager know.

In circumstances where a buddy system is appropriate as a way of reducing the risks identified in the risk assessment, the buddy must have relevant details about your lone working, that may include;

- where you are going (address or area if there is no address);
- details of the purpose (i.e. preparing the hall, grass cutting, meeting);
- contact details of anyone you intend to meet (any additional contact details for the location you are visiting);
- your mode of transport;
- when you are expected to return;

Your buddy must know what to do if you do not return or make contact at the anticipated/agreed time. You may use an app to manage details if you have completed the Buddy Form.

Health and wellbeing

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with your manager or specific councillors. This includes pregnancy. You can then jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with your confidentiality of the utmost importance.

Reporting incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. The report should include:

- A brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved,
- For any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator should be captured, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence, and,
- In either instance, this might also include recording details of any circumstances you think might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances. This information would then support us to review our risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

If you feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call your manager, buddy or councillor or colleague to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

Call your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

— policy ends here —

Guidance for Staff

Lone working should be avoided wherever possible as it greatly increases the risks of incident and injury. However, if lone working is unavoidable, always be aware of safe routes for withdrawing from a location or situation. Make sure you report any sites or incidents that either could have or did lead to an undesirable outcome, as soon as possible.

Before any task is undertaken, please consider:

- Are you capable of undertaking the task without assistance?
- Are you fully aware of the hazards involved and the risks to which they are exposed?
- Do you know what to do in an emergency, unforeseen or difficult situation?
- Have you informed another person (your nominated Buddy) of your whereabouts, your planned time of return, and the action to be taken if you fail to return? You may consider using a social app to achieve this.
- Some types of work should never be undertaken alone, such as working at night or use of chainsaws or other hazardous equipment.

Employees and volunteers who are working alone should:

- Always carry a fully charged mobile phone and make sure that you can get a signal.
- Identify yourself and the capacity in which you represent the Parish Council to landowners if you are working on private land.
- Avoid inflaming situations, especially when you are outnumbered, use your judgment and apply common sense.
- In the case of serious criminal damage or other serious offences call for assistance from the police or your assigned buddy before confronting the offender(s). When calling the police dial 999 explain the situation, tell them that you are going to confront an offender and that there could be a breach of the peace. This is likely to evoke a fast response.
- Try to avoid direct involvement until backup arrives. Observe the situation from a safe distance taking notes, photographs etc. When direct action is necessary, where possible ensure that an impartial witness to events is present. This is likely to reduce the risk of assault and will provide you with a stronger case if allegations are subsequently filed against you.
- Do not provoke violence through obstruction or attempting to confiscate things.
- Never confront people with firearms. Always call the Police.
- Record all events accurately together with the names and addresses of witnesses.

Note: Staff members should not go, or ask volunteers, to visit people with previous history of aggressive problems. Nor should they allow them access to Parish premises.

Make sure you have received appropriate training for the task to be carried out on site or in any indoor location and that you fully understand the nature of the work you are to carry out, the hazards that may arise and the precautions to be taken.

Depending on the site and the nature of work it may be appropriate to carry the following personal protective equipment:

- Suitable outdoor clothing, map and compass/ GPS, whistle, fully charged mobile phone, watch, torch with spare batteries, first aid kit, food and fresh water.
- Know your limitations and do not take unnecessary risks. If you do not feel fit to carry out the task allocated, do not do it.

The lone working reporting system - the 'Buddy' Form

- Designate a 'buddy' and inform him / her of your intentions and leave her / him with contact numbers, name and address or location information.
- When you arrive at any site where you will be working alone, first make sure you have a working mobile phone and check whether you are working in a poor signal reception area. If the signal is weak, find a nearby phone box to call in your whereabouts (if outdoors) giving as much information as you can, and how long you intend to spend there. Give the number and location of the phone box if using one.
- If a situation arises where you feel you are in any doubt about your safety as a lone worker you should withdraw from the site and if necessary, call the police for assistance. No job or task is so important that you need to put yourself at risk. Avoid confrontation, walk away and head towards a more public place where you can raise an alarm if necessary.
- Once the task is completed, call your 'buddy' on leaving the site. If your 'buddy' is unavailable for any reason, leave a message with a second contact with strict instructions to pass it on.

Emergency procedure for buddies if lone worker fails to report in:

- 30 minutes after the lone worker was due to report in, call on the given number every 5 - 10 minutes (using mobile, office, and home contact numbers). For lone workers known to be travelling, attempts should be made to contact the destination to check for news of traffic delays. Continue to attempt contacting the lone worker.
- After a further 30 minutes have elapsed the 'buddy' must plan a search, plus continue to attempt contacting the lone worker.
- After one hour a physical search must commence. If contact cannot be established within two hours of the elapsed report time the police must be contacted.

Buddy form

Complete the following Buddy Form (update if details change). You may have more than one buddy depending on the type of work you are undertaking, in which case please complete one form per buddy.

Your buddy will ideally be a colleague, or a family member, or a friend that you regularly have contact with and who is aware of your area of work. Please ensure that your Buddy is familiar with the procedures. You may also find it useful to keep a copy for yourself. A copy should be given to the Clerk.

In the event of failure to report in by the specified times, follow the procedures on the preceding page.

Name of Lone Worker		
Contact address		
Contact phone numbers	Work: Mobile:	Home: Other:

Name of Next of Kin		
Contact address		
Contact phone numbers	Work: Mobile:	Home: Other:

Name of Buddy		
Contact address		
Contact phone numbers	Work: Mobile:	Home: Other:

Code word(s) in case you need assistance:
Travel / vehicle details (including car registration, make and colour):
Known risks to inform the emergency services if emergency procedures are implemented:

Risk Assessment Form						
Dept: L&FPC Staff			Date Assessed: 19 th November 2025		Assessed by: Jon Sloan	
Task/ Activity: Lone Working			Review Date: end 2026		Reference Number: v1.0	
Activity/ Task	Hazard/Risk	Persons at risk	Controls in place	Probability	Impact	Residual Risk Review
Driving to meetings etc. Driving to and from various sites for work	Car hijacking Theft of items from vehicle Road rage Accidents Vehicle breakdown	Employees Councillors	Need for journeys replaced by: • Having telephone calls • Reduce need to travel – use journey management planning Employees entitled to use alternative means of transport. Employees to check vehicle(s) daily prior to use (fuel, tyres, lights, etc). Plan journey beforehand. Keep valuables to a minimum / hidden from view. Keep vehicle doors locked. Mobile phone to be kept available for emergency use.	LOW	MED	MEDIUM Implement specific driving for work policy
Walking between offices / sites	Walking in remote locations / in dark Theft of valuables Violence / aggression		All staff have access to Council-supplied or personal communications device. Council sites have external lighting or in well-lit areas. Mobile phones to be kept charged	LOW	LOW	LOW Provide vulnerable staff with attack alarms Training for staff on dealing with violence and aggression

Working in remote locations	Accident / illness Violence / aggression		All staff have access to Council-supplied or personal communications device. Staff to wear supplied PPE - hi-viz tabard, gloves, goggles (as needed). Destination / current location logged with manager / office / buddy scheme. Staff required to notify manager of any illnesses or injuries which may increase risk. Mobile phones to be kept charged.	LOW	LOW	LOW Provide vulnerable staff with attack alarms. Training for staff on dealing with violence and aggression.
Working with hazardous substances / work equipment	Exposure to chemicals Injury from equipment Equipment failure Restricted access to first aid	Employees Councillors	Prohibited activities determined e.g. confined space work, work on or near live electrical conductors, chainsaws, working over water Specific risk assessments in place for higher risk activities, e.g. litter picking, Community SpeedWatch, CEV	LOW	LOW	MED Establish safe systems of work for work with hazardous substances / equipment Establish emergency plans, including fire, first aid etc.
Working at height	Fall from height		All personnel prohibited from working at height.	LOW	MED	LOW Not needed as prohibited

Meetings with staff, public, contractors	Violence / aggression		Rooms laid out so that access remains unimpeded during meeting. Staff advised to meet wherever possible in public space. If not possible, then to position themselves closest to the exit. Check authenticity of persons prior to visit Arrange to meet office / public places Other staff to attend where possible	LOW	LOW	LOW Training for public facing staff on dealing with violence and aggression
Working alone in premises or department	Accident / incident Restricted access to support Work equipment failure Security / violence		Access doors to be kept locked when working alone. No visitors inside the office when alone. Communication device(s) available for staff working alone – personal or Council-supplied	LOW	LOW	LOW Establish plans for emergencies Consider automatic warning devices / alarms / CCTV / doorbell camera

Out of hours working or night working	Accident Violence / aggression	Employees Councillors	Premises well lit. Where possible, shifts planned so more than one person working at nights. Communications kept available for staff working nights. Ensure staff have access to suitable means of transport to prevent walking / driving alone where possible. Mobile phones to be kept charged.	LOW	LOW	LOW Provide vulnerable staff with attack alarms Emergency plans - establish for night working Health assessments offered to establish fitness to work Consider automatic warning devices / alarms / CCTV / doorbell camera
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