

Managing Lone Workers: The Basics

If an employee works either out of sight or earshot from another colleague for any part of their working day, they are classified as a lone worker. This extends to those working from home, and with research showing that 45% of full-time employees are currently working either partly or fully remotely, it's more important than ever to protect home workers.

According to the Labour Force Survey, **441,000 people sustained an injury at work in 2021/22**, but proper preparation can significantly reduce the likelihood of an injury becoming serious.

You must consider:

The Risks of Working Alone

Lone workers face the same hazards at work as anyone else, but there is a greater risk of the situation escalating as there may be no one around to help. Some risks include:



Sudden illness or accident



Violence, threats or abuse



Theft or intruders



Driving related incidents

Identifying Your Lone Workers

- Those who work outside normal office hours
- Those working from home
- Those working with the public
- Those working in remote areas
- Those who travel for work
- Those who work in isolation

Employer Obligations

As an employer, you have a moral and legal duty of care to ensure that all staff are safe at work, no matter their role.

Lone workers are subject to the same health and safety legislation as all other employees. In the UK, employers must comply with Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 sets out the general health and safety duties of employers and employees 'so far as is reasonably practicable' – meaning putting in place policies and procedures that reduce risks that can be identified in advance.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers carry out risk assessments, implement safe working practices, appoint suitable employees and invest in appropriate training.

Non-compliance Penalties

On 1st February 2016 the UK passed the Health and Safety Act 2015, which increased the severity of penalties for companies neglecting safety of its workers. These changes now mean that non-compliance to health and safety legislation can be punishable by:



Large fines



Imprisonment



Lost reputation and business

How to protect lone workers

Steps that employers can take to protect the safety of lone workers:

Conduct a thorough lone worker risk assessment

Take steps to reduce or eliminate the risks identified

Provide lone worker training and supervision where appropriate

Produce a written health and safety policy and ensure all employees understand it

Invest in a personal safety service

Introduce a process for reporting incidents

Regularly review risk assessments and policies

For more information visit:
www.peoplesafe.co.uk

References:

- [1. https://press.spglobal.com/2020-06-18-COVID-19-Shakes-Up-the-Future-of-Work](https://press.spglobal.com/2020-06-18-COVID-19-Shakes-Up-the-Future-of-Work)
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