



Somerset
Council

HS009 Working Alone Safely Policy

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	Working Alone Safely
Author	Benjamin Smith
Owner	The Health & Safety Service
Protective Marking	Official - Unclassified
Primary Legislation	<u>Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999</u>

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Policy on a page

Working alone, or “Lone working” can be described as working in any place where the following may apply:

- Working in a fixed establishment with nobody else on site, or in the establishment at a separate, isolated location away from others.
- Working in a remote location, including outdoors e.g. rural and countryside settings, on Highways.
- Working outside of normal office hours e.g. at night where an employee may be the sole duty holder.
- Work on other employers' premises e.g. hospitals, health centres or when visiting people's homes.
- Working from home.
- Travelling in the course of work.

This policy and associated guidance provide the Council's rules that must be followed, the standards to be maintained, and signposts to further guidance. It also highlights the risks to users, clients and the Council, and the potential consequences of breaching this policy.

This document and associated guidance will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3rd Party Contractors (on request), Secondees and Volunteers.**

Key Messages

- Managers will make written assessments of the risks from working alone, using the Somerset Council 'Lone Working' risk assessment form (HS F09), noting all current and proposed control measures.
- Employees will follow any personal safety practices outlined by management and co-operate with managers in implementing the safe systems of work identified from their lone working risk assessments.
- Employees will be required to (where a need is identified) wear a personal safety device to further help protect them from situations where there is a recognised risk of threats, violence, or attack.

This “policy on a page” is a summary of the detailed policy and guidance documents, please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the arrangements stated.

Responsibilities

Somerset Council will ensure:

- Compliance with The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and refer to HSE guidance document INDG73 – Protecting lone workers: How to control the risks of lone working, in establishing its methods and procedures in regard to protecting its employees, visitors, contractors, volunteers, and anyone who may be harmed through their actions or omissions.
- Through the design of policy and procedures and its management of them, the health, safety, and welfare of its employees be, so far as reasonably practicable, protected.

Directors and Senior Managers will:

- Ensure that this policy and guidance is implemented in their respective business areas.
- Ensure business areas under their control are adequately resourced to implement effective arrangements to control risks associated with working alone, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Service Managers and those with direct line-management responsibilities for employees undertaking working activities alone will:

- Ensure that all potentially hazardous lone working situations are identified, appropriate risk assessments undertaken, safe systems of work introduced, and employees are provided with the necessary information, instruction, and training.
- Identify any work activities where regulations prohibit lone working.
- Ensure that risk assessments are undertaken by people competent in risk assessment (training is provided by the Health and Safety Service).
- Make written assessments of the risks from working alone using the SC risk assessment form (HS F09), noting all current and proposed control measures. (Schools should complete the EEC Lone Working risk assessment).
- If the residual risk (the risk that remains following implementation of all control measures) is identified as high, (and therefore normally unsuitable for lone working) pass the assessment to their director or ensure alternative arrangements are in place e.g. backup or support is provided, appointment is held virtually or in a safer, public location.
- If the residual risk is identified as medium; pass the assessment to their Strategic Manager or head of service for approval.
- Establish, supervise, and regularly review the effectiveness of risk assessments and any accompanying safe systems of work.
- Provide employees with personal safety devices where they are deemed to be working in environments that poses a significant risk to that employee's health and safety.

- Investigate working alone incidents or near misses that are reported and record on the relevant council reporting system (EEC used by schools). The F18 Investigating H&S Incidents document is available to support follow-up actions and investigations.
- Ensure that equipment such as Personal Safety Devices designed to protect the lone worker are:
 - Correctly set up and used effectively especially by employees operating in high-risk lone working environments.
 - Maintained in good working order.
 - Regularly tested to ensure they are working properly.
- Ensure that lone working applications (e.g. What Three Words) and communications systems (e.g. Outlook, Teams) are used by employees who work alone.
- Develop an appropriate lone working system, agreed by the team, where the lone worker can communicate and be located if they are in lone working situations.
- Ensure that workers, including employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors who are or may be working alone:
 - Have full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which he or she is being exposed.
 - Know what to do if something goes wrong.
 - Understand and observe the procedures or safe systems of work.
 - Receive any training (as indicated in the risk assessment), e.g. in the relevant aspects of personal safety, and the safe use of any equipment provided to aid their safety.

Employees will:

- Take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others and not put themselves in danger.
- Follow procedures and risk assessments set by your service for Working Alone.
- Follow any personal safety procedures implemented by their service area or management.
- Co-operate with managers to implement, monitor, and update safe systems of work identified from lone working activities and risk assessments.
- Comply with all relevant policies and attend training as appropriate.
- Use Personal Safety Devices that have been supplied where your procedures or risk assessment identify that you are operating in an environment with high/significant risks. The Personal Safety Devices must be used in full accordance with training and instruction on the safe and effective use of the device, providing an additional safety measures alongside existing lone working procedure.
- Engage in systems that allows colleagues or buddies to know where they are when working alone.
- Maintain calendars or diaries as a means of informing colleagues and buddies when you will be working alone where the travel or location places you at greater risk or vulnerability. This is so colleagues or buddies can commence emergency procedures if the lone worker returns late or does not return from an appointment as expected, or where 'keeping in touch' systems with the lone working employee are lost.
- Report unsafe activities or faulty equipment to their manager.
- Report new or previously unidentified lone working situations to their manager.

- Report any accidents, incidents of violence, aggression or near misses using existing H&S Management systems. Further guidance on Reporting H&S Incidents - HS 003.

The Health and Safety Service will:

- Offer advice to managers regarding this policy and associated guidance.
- Maintain and communicate this policy.
- Review this policy at intervals not exceeding 3 years.
- Provide technical advice when required.
- Audit Compliance with this policy.
- Offer training courses in risk assessment.
- Provide suitable guidance in assessing the risk of lone working situations.

Governance Arrangements

Policy Compliance

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's [disciplinary procedure](#).

Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within Somerset Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and publishing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation.

Responsible	The Health and Safety Service
Accountable	Chief Executive
Consulted	LGR JNF Union Group, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG), HR Committee
Informed	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the Health and Safety Service and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
June 2013	CHSU	V01	Draft Revision
July 2017	Fiona Packer	V02	Final version
1 st March 2018	Fiona Parker	V03	Amended to reflect B-Safe (New H&S management system) & new links to OH assist
May 2021	Steve Dorrall	V04	Draft version created following Lone Working Group, updates include references to personal safety devices and home working arrangements brought upon by Covid-19
April 2024	Ben Smith	V05	Scheduled Review

Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor	Daniel Thomas	
Executive Director of Strategy Workforce & Localities and chair of HSWSG	Alyn Jones	
HR Committee	Committee	