



Do you employ staff?

Do you have difficulty understanding
your legal and contractual
responsibilities as an employer?

Do employment problems keep you
awake at night?

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Lone Working

What is Lone Working?

A Lone Worker is an employee who works on their own in isolation from other workers and without direct supervision. This may be an office worker who works from home, drivers who spend their working day alone on the road, or a salesperson who travels from place to place independently. It can also include people who work in the workplace but at a different time i.e. a night time security guard or a cleaner.

The Risks to the Employee

There are many ways that lone working can create risks for the employee involved. According to the CIPD a recent report conducted by the Institute of Occupational Medicine has shown that two thirds of remote workers report psychological distress and more general symptoms of ill health than employees who operate in a social work environment. There can also be a risk to the employee's career progression due to their social isolation and lack of informal interaction at the office. They could fall victim to being "out of sight out of mind" meaning that employees could miss out on being properly managed, developed and they could also be overlooked for opportunities. Employees who work alone could fall victim to accidents or injuries and have no one around to administer emergency first aid. This could be hazardous to their health and potentially life threatening.

Responsibilities of the Employer

The employer has the responsibility of ensuring the safety and well-being of all employees including those who work remotely or away from the office. HSE guidance (INDG73 rev3) states that the employee must first be evaluated to see whether they are medically fit and suitable to be working alone. If it is decided that the employee is capable then the employer will have the responsibility of conducting thorough risk assessments of the employee's environment with the aim of eliminating any risks to their health. It is also recommended that the employer provides the employee with training in areas such as risk assessment, diffusion/de-escalation skills and disengagement techniques (in the case of a conflict or hazardous/dangerous situation), first aid training, personal safety and dealing with an emergency. Training such as this can help reduce problems that lone workers may encounter. Employers can also help their employees by providing them with protective equipment that may help them in dangerous situations i.e. a personal attack alarm.

Employers also have to ensure that they provide their remote employees with an appropriate amount of management. They need to be supportive of the problems that may arise from lone working such as mental illness. A good amount of supervision and interaction can prevent employees from feeling isolated or forgotten about, helping to ensure they feel like they have a good working relationship with their employers. By providing remote employees with a good level of regular communication they should hopefully work well despite the possible risks surrounding them.

How We Can Help

We can help you as an employer by educating you on your legal obligations as an employer from a Health and Safety point of view. We can also provide you with an up to date and legally compliant Lone Working policy, making sure that your Company will be working correctly and on the right side of employment law.

If you have any queries relating to any of the subjects raised within this newsletter then please don't hesitate to contact us at hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk



For clarification of any of the above updates or for advice and guidance on any HR and/or Health and Safety Concerns contact us by emailing hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk or by calling 02476 664092.



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