

TENBURY TOWN COUNCIL



Lone Working Policy

LONE WORKING POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Tenbury Town Council recognises that employees are required to work by themselves without close or direct supervision for significant periods of time, sometimes in isolated work areas or out of office hours.
- 1.2. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Tenbury Town Council has an obligation to look after the health, safety and welfare of their employees and contractors. However, employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.

2. Scope of the Policy

- 2.1. This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the Council employees.
- 2.2. The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”. This covers all of the Council’s employees: the Clerk, the Clerk’s Assistant, the Groundsman and the Caretaker, all of whom are required to carry out duties for all or part of their working day in isolation.
- 2.3. Lone workers include:

Those working at their main place of work where:

- Only one person is working on the premises
- People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations.
- People working outside normal office hours

Those working away from their fixed base where:

- One worker is visiting another premises or meeting venue;
- One worker is making a home visit to an individual;
- One worker is working from their own home.

3. Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- a) increase employee awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;

- b) ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable;
- c) ensure that appropriate training is available so that employees are able to recognise risk and to provide practical advice of safety when working alone;
- d) encourage full reporting and recording of any incidents relating to lone working;
- e) reduce the potential of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Tenbury Town Council is responsible for:

- a) ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
- b) providing resources for putting the policy into practice;
- c) ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that they regularly review the effectiveness of the policy;
- d) ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy;
- e) identify situations where employees work alone and decide whether a system can be adopted to avoid employees carrying out tasks on their own;
- f) ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly, putting procedures and safe systems into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce risks associated with working alone;
- g) managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents;
- h) ensuring employees identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, training, updating and refreshing this training as necessary;
- i) provide a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment, if and where this is felt to be desirable;
- j) ensuring that appropriate support and equipment is given to staff involved in any incident.

4.2. Employees are responsible for:

- a) taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- b) following guidance and procedures designed for safe working;

- c) reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate and complete an accident form;
- d) taking part in any training designed to meet the requirements of the policy;
- e) reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone;
- f) maintain good communication to minimise risk.

5. Guidance for Risk Assessment of Lone Working

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. Assessment will be carried out for and on behalf of all employees whose working practice makes them vulnerable. Recommendations will be made to eliminate or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. A lone workers checklist will be completed. This will be used as a tool to identify if the existing control measures are adequate and if not, what modifications or additional actions can be considered necessary to help reduce the risks associated with lone working. Once the checklist has been completed a risk assessment will be carried out and documented in a risk assessment form.

Risk assessments for lone workers will include:

- is the person fit and suitable to work alone;
- safe access and exit;
- are there adequate channels of communication in an emergency;
- site security and security arrangements i.e response to personal alarms;
- are women especially at risk if they work alone;
- does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker;
- is there a risk of violence;
- travelling to site or meetings - what procedures are in place;
- is equipment safe for individual use.

6. Incident Reporting

An incident is defined as an “unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage”. In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents

be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action that may be required. If the incident relates to the Clerk then the incident should be reported to the Chair of Council and/or the Chair of Finance and Staffing Committee. Employees should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or 'unsafe' (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

7. Contacting/Involving the Police

The Council is committed to protecting its employees from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All employees are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process. Except in the cases of emergency, employees should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report details of the incident.

8. Support for Employees

Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Employees should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk or unsafe. Employees should also recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. All lone workers' training needs will be assessed and appropriate training arranged.

9. Immediate Support following a Violent Incident

In an event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours, the Clerk or the Council's Chair should be contacted. The Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. The Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

10. Lone Working for the Clerk

Where the items above relate directly to the Clerk as an employee the appropriate controls will be exercised by the Council or, in an emergency, the Chair of Council and/or the Chair of Finance and Staffing Committee.

11. Good Practice for Lone Workers

- During work hours, all employees leaving the workplace (or home) should leave the details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back with another party, if possible.
- If, during the trip away, any plans change significantly this should be communicated back to the other party.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries with them.
- Lone workers should have a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- All incidents must be reported to the Council. Employees / Members should ensure that all incidents, where they feel threatened or unsafe, are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse. If emergency assistance is required whilst out and about all employees should dial 999.
- An employee is at liberty to refuse to meet with a Council Member, a contractor, members of the public alone, if they feel threatened or feel it would be inappropriate.
- Telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague/councillor may be advisable.

12. Exemptions

Employees and volunteers are exempt from working alone in certain situations:

- Young persons under instruction in a fixed base (example work experience, helping with Council tasks etc.)
- Where activities and work with substances/machinery could be hazardous to health.