

Lone Worker Policy

Introduction

Wigginton and Hopwas Parish Council takes the health and safety of its employees and volunteers seriously. We have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our employees and volunteers while at work or carrying out volunteer activity. We realise that at any given time, staff or volunteers may be working or volunteering alone.

Aim and Scope

This policy is designed to alert employees and volunteers to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is designed to give employees and volunteers a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

Context

Wigginton and Hopwas Parish Council have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and volunteers while at work or engaged in volunteer activity. At any given time, employees or volunteers may be alone when operating on our behalf externally. We are responsible for assessing the risks to lone workers and taking steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. Employees and volunteers have responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others in lone working situations. Lone working is not inherently unsafe. Taking precautions can reduce the risks associated with working alone. This policy is designed for employees and volunteers who either frequently or occasionally work or volunteer alone. It also refers to both high and low risk activities.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. For example:

- People working separately from others in a building
- People who work outside 'normal' hours
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues
- People who work at home other than in low risk, office-type work

The definition covers staff and volunteers in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures.

Potential Hazards of Working Alone

People who work or volunteer alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur when there is no-one to call for help or first aid available
- Fire
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building for example, danger of being accidentally locked in
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone

Measures to reduce the risk of lone working

To reduce the risk for people working alone we carry out a risk assessment of the following issues, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access.

- The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk.
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations.
- Any other special circumstances.

All available information will be considered, and risk assessments will be updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

In any situation where an employee or volunteer is operating alone and feels unsafe, they must remove themselves from that situation immediately and report the incident to the Parish Clerk¹

In any situation where an employee or volunteer is operating alone and an incident occurs, this must be reported to the Parish Clerk¹ as soon as possible. An incident is any situation where the health and safety of the employee or volunteer is compromised and may include an accident, fire, violence, or threat of violence (this is not exhaustive).

Supervision

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. We ensure that you understand the risks associated with your work and the relevant safety precautions.

- Employees or volunteers will be given training that covers lone working where appropriate during induction
- Employees or volunteers new to a role where they may be lone working may need to be accompanied initially
- Regular contact by phone may be appropriate and we ensure that employees or volunteers carrying out duties alone always have a mobile phone available to enable them to contact the Parish Clerk¹ in the event of an emergency.

Accidents and Emergencies

Employees and volunteers operating alone should be made aware of the process for responding correctly to emergencies. Employees or volunteers who are alone are responsible for adhering to health and safety policies and must not take unnecessary risks.

Conclusion

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other staff or volunteers, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors.

Wigginton and Hopwas Parish Council ensures that measures are in place to reduce risk and that expectations have been communicated to employees and volunteers operating alone and appropriate training provided.

All staff and volunteers, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and should take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with carrying out their normal duties.

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Related Legislation

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

¹ The Parish Clerk must report matters directly to the Chair of the Council