

St. Mary's Church, West Acklam, Middlesbrough

Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy

Introduction

There is no legal prohibition on working alone but the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require every employer to identify hazards to which employees are exposed, assess risks involved and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks. Therefore, St Mary's PCC is required to provide a safe environment, safe equipment and safe systems of work for its employees, voluntary workers and others working on its premises and recognises its duty to assess risks to lone workers and to take steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary.

Aim

To increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone working, alert employees and voluntary helpers to the risks presented by lone working.

To identify the responsibilities each person has in lone working situations.

To ensure the risks of lone working are assessed in a systematic and ongoing way.

To enable safe systems and methods of work to be put into place to reasonably and practicably reduce risks.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees and voluntary helpers and where appropriate contractors and applies to all situations involving lone working.

Definition

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision and include those who:

- Work away from an office base
- Work outside normal working hours
- Are alone on the premises
- Work in the same building as colleagues but in an area on their own

"At risk" is defined as a reasonable possibility of a person being exposed to danger or violence.

Risk Assessment Process

The PCC will:

- ensure that all lone working activities are formally identified
- identify all persons who are lone workers
- undertake an appropriate risk assessment to identify the hazards and the level of risk to which each lone worker is exposed
- identify, prioritise and implement suitable control measures where required

The risk assessment process will ensure that consideration is given to the following issues.

a) Is lone working necessary?

b) Can the risk of the task be adequately controlled by one person?

- Does the workplace or visit present a special risk?
- Is there a safe way in and out for one person?
- Can any necessary equipment be handled by one person?
- Can lifting be carried out safely by one person?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk?

c) Is the lone worker medically fit and suitable to work alone?

- Encourage voluntary workers to volunteer information regarding any medical conditions which may make them unsuitable to work alone.

d) Is any training required to ensure competency in safety matters?

- Discuss risk and precautions and give guidance regarding limits of what can and cannot be done while working alone to enable lone workers to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

e) What will happen if the lone worker becomes ill has an accident or there is an emergency?

- The risk assessment will identify foreseeable event. Lone workers will be provided with information regarding the emergency procedures established to enable correct response to emergencies.
- Voluntary helpers involved in lone working situations will be encouraged to operate a system of checks (with family or friends) that they have returned on completion of the task.

Responsibility of the employer

Assess reasonably foreseeable risks

Implement control measures appropriate to the nature of the lone working and the risk involved, for example, training, supervision and protective equipment. Take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, for example, fire, equipment failure, illness, accidents. Provide back-up if risk assessment shows that lone working cannot be done safely. If back-up cannot be provided in high risk situations then lone working should not be permitted.

Ensure a system is in place for the lone worker to call for help/ and a procedure in place if the lone worker fails to phone in or make contact.

Keep a record of employee/ volunteer worker and next of kin contact number.

Keep a record of any health issues which may affect employee/voluntary worker whilst working alone.

Ensure that a communication system is in place so that the employer knows that the lone worker is safe, for example, location and order of visits, telephone contact.

Arrange a health and safety induction for new employees. Ensure that incident book/ accident book is kept up to date.

Check insurance cover.

Responsibility of employee/ volunteer lone worker

Take reasonable care of your own safety. Know what the contact arrangements are and whom to contact in an emergency.

Be aware what is happening around you at all times. If possible pre plan home visits. Do not enter and make alternative arrangements if you feel there may be a risk. Whenever practical ensure that no other person is between you and the exit.

Operate a system of checks with family, friends or neighbours notifying them of intended destination and expected duration of time away.

Report any incidents of violence or aggressive behaviour.

When appropriate keep to well-lit public areas or arrange for another to be present.

If making a home visit take a fully charged mobile phone.

Keep valuables out of site in a vehicle.

Reverse into parking spaces to enable quick and easy departure.

References

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

www.legislation.gov.uk

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999

www.hse.uk

Working Alone in Safety INDG73 (HSE)

Personal Safety Advice Factsheet (National Churchwatch)

www.nationalchurchwatch.com

Lone Working and Personal Safety

St Bartholomew and All Saints PCC

Lone Working

Diocese of Oxford

Guidance Risk Assessment for Lone Workers

The Methodist Church