LONE WORKING POLICY

Contents

1. Introduction

The ng group takes the health, safety and welfare of all its staff extremely seriously. We recognise that some staff are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community or in isolated work areas. The purpose of this policy is to enable the ng group to meet its duty of care to protect such staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working. This policy sets out a framework for mitigating risks associated with lone working.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff including temporary and agency staff, contractors, volunteers, interns and those on work experience. It forms an integral part of the organisation's Health and Safety policy. The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of our staff.

3. Definition

The ng group defines lone workers as:

'staff whose working activities involve situations where they are without any kind of close or direct supervision.'

4. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues to lone working
- Ensure that the risk of working alone is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way and to ensure that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to staff in all areas, that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone
- Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working

5. **Responsibilities**

Lone working environments present a unique health and safety challenge. Although there is no specific legal guidance on working alone, under the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974*, and the *Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, as amended*, *the Corporate Homicide Act 2007 and Protection from Harassment Act 1997*, at the ng group it is recognised that we must organise and control the health and safety of lone workers. Managers and staff should accept responsibility for and support the use of systems, procedures and technology designed to enhance their protection. Under our duty of care we have specific responsibilities to our staff as detailed below:

The CEO is ultimately responsible for:
- Making sure that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice
- Making sure that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Directorate regularly reviews the effectiveness of the lone working policy and procedures and that this information is provided to the Board

Heads of Departments/Managers are responsible for:
- Making sure that all staff are aware of the policy
- Making sure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone
- Making sure that staff groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction and updates including refresher training as necessary
- Making sure that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and reporting incidents

When a lone working device is designated as an operational control, managers must:
- Provide lone working devices to the relevant staff members under their supervision
- Ensure comprehensive and relevant training is provided and completed prior to device usage
- Ensure proper use and wear of the device by staff members
- Monitor device usage when working alone
- Familiarise themselves with the lone working management portal, ensuring accurate and up to date information including users' emergency escalation contacts and processes
- Review colleagues' device usage through the portal and address any non-compliance
- Add lone working as a regular agenda item at any relevant management meetings to ensure

continual monitoring and regular updates

All staff are responsible for:
- Taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their own actions
- Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working
- Notifying a manager or colleague when they know they're going to be working alone or in a high risk environment
- Ensuring someone is always aware of where they're going and how long they're expected to be there
- Always informing a manager or colleague if they plan to deviate from their usual working pattern
- Using their lone worker safety device appropriately to decide on the best function for their safety. **Red Alert** in a genuine emergency or **Incapacitation Alert** when working at height for example.
- Familiarising themselves with operational control measures in relation to their personal safety
- Ensuring that their mobile phones and lone worker safety devices are charged, functional and always accessible
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others asking for guidance as appropriate
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the lone working policy
- Reporting any dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone
- **Lone working devices are form of PPE issued for staff safety, failure to use the lone working device will be considered as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action**

Staff members who have been issued with a lone working device are responsible for:
- Knowing how to properly use the device and completing necessary training (and refresher training whenever necessary)
- Ensuring their lone working device is fully charged and worn correctly when working alone
- Regularly checking the device's status for battery, signal and GPS location
- Leaving alerts when they arrive at a location or begin a new task
- Promptly reporting any device faults to their line manager

6. Assessing Risk

Lone workers should not face any more risks than other staff within the organisation. Setting up safe working arrangements for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other staff, therefore the ng group must follow the general principles of risk assessment. If a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, other arrangements must be put in place.

Risk assessment should take account of both normal work and foreseeable emergencies such as fire, illness and accidents. The risk assessment process is summarised below, separated into five distinct stages and incorporates action points to support effective assessment of the risks involved in lone working.

	Process	Action point
1	Identifying lone workers	Establish and identify lone workers for each work area.
2	Identifying associated hazards	Isolate the range of dangers associated with whole work areas and/or work processes. Review a generic risk assessment to make sure you have included these issues.
3	Assessing the degree of risk for generic or individual situations	Review the generic risk assessments and complete individual or local risk assessments if necessary. Then prioritise the level of associated risk.
4	Putting control measures in place and developing safe systems of work	Assess how effective the existing control measures are and update them if appropriate. Develop local procedures or action plans if necessary.
5	Evaluating and review	Evaluate and review how effective the control measures are. Assess what changes are required and implement changes as appropriate – ongoing evaluation and review.

Risk assessments must be carried out in all areas of work where working alone poses an actual or potential risk to staff. The risk assessment will involve identifying all potential dangers and the risks associated with specific work tasks or activities. It should identify who will be affected and how, and the control measures which are needed to get rid of or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably possible.

Risk assessment should be carried out by the line manager and the relevant staff member(s) and should be recorded and shared with relevant staff. Factors to consider when carrying out the risk assessment include the following:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- What training is needed to make sure that the staff member is competent in safety matters?
- Have staff received the training which is necessary to allow them to work alone?
- How will the person be supervised?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are people of a particular gender at risk if they work alone?
- Are younger/older workers especially at risk if they work alone?
- What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident or if there is an emergency?
- Are there systems in place for contacting and tracing those who work alone?

Details of the risk assessment should be recorded and should include:
- The extent and nature of the risks
- Factors that contribute to the risk including job content and specific tasks and activities
- The safe systems of work to be followed to eliminate or reduce the risk

Information from the risk assessment should be passed to staff. Risk assessments should be reviewed and updated each year (or sooner, should circumstances change).

7. Managing Risk

The risk which lone workers face should be reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable. Using safe systems of work depends largely on local circumstances, and local procedures or protocols should be in place to provide specific guidance for staff in relation to lone working and the associated risk reduction. Issues to consider in developing safe systems of work include:
- Joint working with others for high-risk activities
- Improvements to security arrangements in buildings
- Security lighting in parking areas
- Using lone working portal monitoring systems
- Effective use of Communications systems for sharing information on risk with colleagues in other disciplines and agencies
- Using the lone worker devices, other personal protective equipment or mobile phones
- Formulating procedures for pre-agreed intervals of regular contact with supervisor/colleagues including procedures for checking in, if not returning to the office
- Conducting 'test/practice' situations to monitor the effectiveness of the organisations lone working procedures

Each type of lone-working situation will need to be assessed and to take account of local circumstances, where necessary. Arrangements for managing risk should include:

- Guidance for lone workers on assessing risk
- Details of when to stop and get advice
- The procedures to be followed in the event of an incident or emergency. All staff must be familiar with these local protocols and procedures

There may also need to be detailed guidance provided to staff to tackle specific areas of risk such as:

- Lone workers travelling alone on work-related business
- Domiciliary and home visits
- Working outwith normal office hours
- Fumigation work and working with dangerous substances

8. Staff Training

ng group will provide staff with appropriate training, where required, to facilitate and support lone working. The training will be based on the needs identified in the risk assessment. This will include training on specific safety procedures for lone working, this could include:

- dealing with violence and aggression
- training in carrying out dynamic risk assessments to respond to constantly changing situations, and
- training on how to use the lone working devices
- managers will receive training on using the Solo Protect portal and monitoring of performance measures and should request refresher training if necessary
- performance measures include managers using the portal to ensure regular, appropriate and correct use of; usage statistics; false alarms; genuine alarms
- how to identify and respond to potential animal attacks
- conducting 'test/practice' situations to monitor effectiveness of the organisations lone working procedures

9. Reporting & Recording

Staff should report all accidents and incidents, including near misses, to their line manager at the earliest opportunity. These should be reported on the appropriate incident form and the line manager and health and safety manager should investigate all reports. .

10. Other Related Policies

- Health & Safety Manual

- Stress and Mental Wellbeing at Work
- Data Protection

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored to make sure that the aims are being achieved. This will be done in conjunction with staff health and safety representatives, trade unions representatives and Professional Organisations, where applicable. The review processes will include:

- Collecting and monitoring all reported incidents through the Health and Safety Forum
- Regularly reporting, to the Health and Safety Forum at each meeting, incident statistics and safety improvement measures which have been introduced, the outcomes of risk assessment and details of training provided
- Regularly reporting to the HR Committee/Board on progress in reducing risk and incidents and identifying recommendations for improvement

This Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier in line with legislative changes or good practice guidelines.

12. UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021

The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021 (UK GDPR) and our own Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in our Fair Processing Notice.

13. Equality Impact Assessment

This Policy is equally applicable to all and has no detrimental impact on protected characteristic groups as specified within the Equality Act 2010.