
Lone Working Policy

Policy Aims:

- To encourage safe working for all volunteers and staff
- To protect volunteers and staff from false accusations
- To ensure that lone working is risk-assessed and safe systems put into place

Scope:

This policy applies to all church volunteers and staff who may be working alone in the church building, driving alone, or visiting private homes on behalf of the church.

Definition:

“Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision and are found in a wide range of situations.”

Lone workers include those who:

- work away from an office base (e.g. visiting)
- work outside normal working hours (e.g. cleaners)
- are the only person on the premises (e.g. administrator; caretaker;)
- work in the same building as colleagues but in a space on their own (e.g. administrator)

At times, many church employees will be in situations where they are a 'lone worker'. The recommendations below try to be realistic about what can and cannot be put in place. Whilst it must be recognised that the Church, as an employer, does not have the structure associated with a large business, its aim is to be a good employer who is concerned about the safety of its employees.

Many lay employees work on a part-time basis, from their own home and so it is equally important to have a system in place to account for their safety too.

Procedures:

The attached guidelines should always be followed. Where practical a risk assessment should be carried out. Where possible a second person should be present.

Further Information:

Can be found at www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

Health & Safety Executive book INDG73 *Working alone in safety*

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should be undertaken of:

- the working practices for a lone worker
- the working environment provided by the employer for an employee

The risk assessment would be part of the Health and Safety at Work Policy of an Employing Body.

Responsibilities of the employer

- To assess the 'reasonably foreseeable risks' (e.g. Is there glass in the office door so that all callers can be seen before the door is opened? Does the Church Youth Club finish at the same time as the local pub? Does the cleaner work late at night and needs to use an un-lit passageway to get home?)
- To ensure that a system is in place for calling for help if there is a problem on the premises.
- To keep on file the employee and their next-of-kin contact phone numbers [and registration details if this is used for work purposes].
- To keep records of any health issues that may affect the employee whilst working alone.
- To ensure that a system is in place so that the employer knows that an employee is safe when working on their own either on or off the premises. (E.g.: via phone calls and location visits)
- To provide all employees making home visits a mobile phone or reimbursement of costs incurred for work-related calls made. [Consider whether other employees would benefit from the provision of a mobile phone].
- To ensure that the employee receives a Health and Safety Induction and that the Certificate of Employers Liability is displayed in the office
- Check that insurance cover adequately covers the work to be undertaken ~ Ensure an accident book is kept up to date

In relation to a lone worker risk assessment, consideration should also be given to

- the remoteness of the workplace
- potential communication problem
- potential for verbal and physical abuse
- Vulnerability of lone workers to feeling of isolation, stress and depression
- Whether or not all the plant, equipment, materials etc can be handled safely by one person
- Whether or not the person is medically fit and able to work alone
- How the lone worker will be supervised
- How the lone worker will obtain help in an emergency such as assault, vehicle breakdown, accident or fire
- Whether or not there is adequate first aid cover

Responsibilities of the employee

- To take reasonable care for your own safety
- To report any incidents of violence or aggressive behaviour
- To arrange to meet unknown individuals in a public place and preferably with another person present
- If making a home visit, to make sure that someone knows where you are going and that you have a mobile phone with you turned on.
- If practical, on leaving your work base tell someone where you are going and when you hope to be back
- If practical, to leave a note stating who and where you are visiting and how you will get there
- To consider a 'buddy system' when you let a colleague or friend know that you have arrived at a visit/premises and when leaving a visit/ premises
- To consider carrying a Personal Shriek Alarm
- To always be 'streetwise' and vigilant, taking note of what is going on around you

Helpful resources:

Health and Safety in churches and other places of worship downloadable from Methodist Insurance's website: Please refer to www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

Signed: (Superintendent Minister)

Dated:

Date for review: Circuit Meeting February

Personal Safety Plan for Church People



Your Personal Safety	Actions you can take to stay safe		
<p>Ask yourself these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would you do if you were in danger? What about if members of your family or people you were responsible for were in danger? Have you put any plans in place, or would you simply rely on instinct? Do you have a personal safety plan? If not, why not? If you do, have you shared it with other people so they know what they need to do? <p>Make sure your Personal Safety Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses any hazards and risks you might face Takes into account where you are and what you're doing Is clear and easy to understand Includes actions you can take to stay safe, and to control risk Is shared with everyone who needs to know them Is reviewed regularly. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Remember – it's fine to put the safety of yourself and your family above the needs of others.</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Remember – You should take suitable precautions to make sure you can never be accused of inappropriate behaviour with a child or vulnerable adult.</p> </div>	<p>At home or the office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a security assessment of the property. Check boundaries, doors and windows are secure, and that there are appropriate safety measures such as security lighting, an intruder alarm or CCTV If possible, use a spyhole or security chain to check who is at the door before you open it Make sure your keys to the home and car are not left on display or accessible from the door or windows Think about whether you need to let uninvited callers into your home. Could you have seating outside, visible from the house, where you could sit and talk? Think about how you might deal with requests for food or money from visitors you're not expecting. For example, put items in a bag so you can pass it to them with one hand, leaving the other hand free to shut the door quickly if you need to. Keep your foot or a doorstep firmly planted behind the door so it can't be forced open If you can, keep your office separate from your home Don't leave visitors alone in your home or office Assess the situation and the visitor. Have an excuse ready if you want to bring the meeting to an end, eg 'I've got another meeting to go to now. Can we re-schedule for another time?' Think about having a personal attack alarm, and make sure other people know what to do when they hear it Set up an emergency code or phrase with your family so they know you're concerned, eg 'I'm expecting a call from John Smith, could you let me know when he calls?' Make sure they know what to do if you say it Plan meetings when other people will be at home Don't let uninvited callers know that you are alone in the house Keep a record book for visitors who are unexpected. 	<p>At Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to never be on your own at the church Make sure someone knows when to expect you home Make sure you have an escape route from the building If driving to the church, park your car so you can get away easily, and always have your car keys to hand Think about having a personal attack alarm, and make sure other people know what to do when they hear it Make sure that your mobile phone is to hand and is fully charged and in good working order If you ever feel that you're in danger, do whatever you can to escape to safety. 	<p>When you're visiting other people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let someone know where you are and when they should expect you back Check that your mobile phone is to hand and is fully charged and in good working order Make sure that you have emergency contact numbers programmed into your mobile phone – you could even add them as speed dial shortcuts Think about having a personal attack alarm, and make sure other people know what to do when they hear it Try to meet people in public, rather than in places you don't know Think carefully before accepting food or drink from someone you don't know Set up an emergency code or phrase with your family so they know you're concerned, eg 'I'm expecting a call from John Smith, could you let me know when he calls?' Make sure they know what to do if you say it Assess the situation and the visitor. Have an excuse ready if you want to bring the meeting to an end, eg 'I've got another meeting to go to now. Can we re-schedule for another time?' Ask someone to call you at regular intervals to check you're safe If you're meeting someone at their house, make a mental note of the layout and how to escape quickly if you need to. Take note of how the door locks and unlocks Let the host lead the way, so doors can't be locked behind you If you ever feel that you're in danger, do whatever you can to escape to safety.
<p>Remember - report any suspicious incidents or people to the police, your Circuit Superintendent or District Chair and anyone else who might need to know</p>			