



WORKING ALONE IN SAFETY

CODE OF PRACTICE

FOR

CONTROLLING THE RISKS OF

WORKING ALONE

AT

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

AUTHORITY

Reviewed: Jan 2016
Next review: 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice is the Authority's response to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 in respect of lone working. It describes how the risks of solitary work are controlled.

Lone working is defined as any work situation where a person is alone and without close or direct supervision.

The Authority is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of all its employees including those who work alone. It is the Authority's duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary. All employees, also have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work.

2. MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

- There is no general prohibition on working alone but wherever this happens the individual circumstances shall be risk assessed. (Some legislation does prohibit lone working for certain jobs. Other tasks are prohibited for lone work by the PDNPA – see Section 4 for further details). For lone working where a significant risk is identified, the risk assessment must be written down. Where necessary, measures shall be put in place to avoid or control risks identified;
- Where risk assessment shows that it is not acceptable for the work to be done by a lone worker then arrangements shall be made to provide help or back up or the work shall be avoided or postponed;
- Risk assessment for lone work shall always consider the need for adequate levels of supervision, instruction, training and qualification (competence);

3. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive

The CEO shall ensure that the PDNPA has overall, adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to enable all work, including solitary work, to be carried out safely.

The CEO shall delegate to Heads of Service the duty of assessing individual lone working requirements and implementing any measures determined by this assessment.

This Code of Practice will be ratified, reviewed and amended by the Management Team.

Heads of Service

Heads of Service will be responsible for

- Ensuring that their service has identified all lone workers, completed risk assessments for all solitary work (these need to be written assessments where a significant risk is identified) and implemented all necessary controls indicated by these assessments to provide a safe system of work. While completion of risk assessments and implementation of control measures may be devolved to and assisted by other Staff and Services, this responsibility shall remain with the Head of Service.
- Where a risk assessment identifies that work cannot be safely completed by a solitary worker then alternative arrangements including where necessary adequate resources of additional personnel and equipment shall be provided.

- Appointing only suitably trained, competent and appropriately qualified persons to perform any solitary work where this work demands any particular level of training, competence and qualification as identified by the risk assessment.
- Ensuring that adequate safety arrangements are made for employees, including lone workers based at properties not operationally-controlled by the Authority.

Safety Officer

The Safety Officer shall be responsible for

- Inspecting Services to audit compliance with this Code of Practice
- Assisting in the undertaking of lone worker risk assessments to ensure legal compliance, as a minimum standard
- Advising on the review of this Code of Practice and associated guidance as necessary

4. LONE WORK RISK ASSESSMENT

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. Achieving a safe system of work for lone workers may require extra or alternative risk-control measures.

Principles of safe lone working

The main principles of a safe system for lone working are:

- a) The person must be **capable of undertaking the work required without assistance**. This includes considering any known medical conditions which may make them unsuitable for working alone generally, or for one specific lone working scenario. Does the work impose any additional physical or mental burden on the individual? Other tasks might not be appropriate for those suffering conditions such as severe allergic reactions to stings (anaphylactic shock), vertigo or claustrophobia. Are women or young persons working alone at particular risk?
- b) The lone worker must be fully **aware of the hazards** they are likely to encounter whilst undertaking a specific lone working task, as well as the general hazards that lone working presents. They must appreciate the level of risk that these hazards present and importantly the precautions to take and systems to follow to ensure that they stay safe.
- c) The lone worker must **know what to do in an emergency**, unforeseen or difficult situation. Actions to be taken in the event of an emergency must be established in advance of the lone working activity wherever possible. They should be agreed between managers and staff, volunteers and contractors and recorded in the risk assessment.
- d) In all cases, another person should **know the whereabouts of the lone worker**, the nature of their work, the planned time of return/ability to keep in touch, and action to be taken if the lone worker fails to return. This system is often referred to as a 'buddy system'. *(See below for more details).*
- e) Where the lone working presents a significant risk (see examples at Appendix B), the risks from lone working situations should be assessed using the established risk assessment procedures. For some activities, the risk assessment for lone working will be a separate risk assessment in its own right, whilst in other circumstances it could form part of a broader risk assessment dealing with a particular work activity or event.

Once completed a risk assessment may simply prohibit lone working and identify alternative working methods. Otherwise, special precautions may be identified including those for new or inexperienced staff such as, increased supervision and/or training. The person responsible should be satisfied that the end result of any assessment and implementation of controls provides a safe system of work.

Lone working is prohibited for some work by legislation or by the PDNPA.

Legislation prohibiting lone working

Whilst the general requirements of this Section apply to all work situations, including lone working, there are some specific pieces of legislation which stipulate that at least two people must be involved in the work activity as part of a safe system of work. Those activities likely to be relevant to the PDNPA are as follows:

f) Confined Spaces Regulations 1997

Where the risk assessment identifies it, as in most cases of confined space work, there will be a need for the work to be carried out under the supervision of a competent person located outside of the confined space. This person will need to be in communication with the person inside the confined space and be able to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency.

g) Work at Height Regulations 2005

Where a person works from a ladder which cannot be secured at the top or bottom, or a suitable proprietary safety device cannot be used to stabilise the ladder, a second person is required to foot the ladder.

Scaffolding may be assembled, dismantled or significantly altered only under the supervision of a competent person.

h) Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

A person working on or near live conductors should be accompanied by another person(s) if their presence could contribute significantly to the prevention of injury.

i) Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Where young persons are asked to do work for which control measures have been put in place but a level of risk remains, the young person must be under the supervision of a competent person.

Note: A 'young person' is someone over the school leaving age but under 18 years of age.

j) Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

For fumigation work, the outcome of the risk assessment will usually be a decision that at least two technicians are needed for the fumigation. One of the technicians should be designated the 'Technician in Charge'.

PDNPA restrictions

In addition to those situations where lone working is prohibited by legislation, there are work activities within the PDNPA where lone working is normally considered to involve unacceptable risks to individuals. The activities include:

- a) Any work (other than workshop maintenance) with chain saws;
- b) Tree climbing and tree surgery;
- c) Use of tractor-mounted winches;
- d) Use of mobile access platforms;
- e) Work on cliff or quarry faces where climbing or abseiling is involved;
- f) Entry into caves and disused mines;
- g) Initial entry into, survey and initial work on derelict and dilapidated buildings and structures;
- h) Roof inspection work on buildings of unknown integrity;
- i) Work in excavations more than 1.2 metres in depth;

- j) Use of endorsed products containing aluminium phosphide or sodium cyanide for extermination of rabbits and moles;
- k) Controlled large-scale burning of vegetation (not bonfires);
- l) Any boat work on large inland waters;
- m) Various activities carried out by persons undergoing training under direct supervision, e.g. the operation of woodworking machines;
- n) Work with children and special needs adults.

This list is not exhaustive and there will be other activities that arise where PDNPA policy (and associated risk assessment) will prohibit lone working. For these activities, lone working is considered to be unacceptable not only for staff and volunteers, but also for contractors working on PDNPA property.

It is very important that jobs that should not be done alone or that require special precautions are clearly identified and that this information is well known.

Work activities where accompanied working is recommended

The following activities involve a significant level of risk, and whilst it is recognised that accompanied working will not always be achievable, it should be planned for and realised as far as is practicable. These activities will require a detailed risk assessment which must identify the precautions to be followed. If they are to be carried out by a person working alone, specific consideration must be given in the risk assessment to the working procedures and the precautions to ensure the safety of the lone worker, including emergency procedures.

- a) Deer culling
- b) Work on cliffs and in quarries where climbing and abseiling are not involved
- c) Field work in hazardous environments
- d) Work in extreme weather conditions
- e) Use of all-terrain vehicles
- f) Boat work in sheltered waters
- g) Work on or near water
- h) Use of mobile and fixed saw benches
- i) Manual handling of large, heavy or bulky objects
- j) Roof work (maintenance and inspection)
- k) Investigation of incidents of suspected theft or break-in, or situations where confrontation can be expected
- l) Visiting remote properties to meet person(s) in situations where conflict is foreseeable, or meeting person(s) previously unknown.

A generic risk assessment is included in the Appendices to this CoP for guidance only

5. TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. Training may be particularly critical to avoid people panicking in unusual situations.

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks involved in the work that they are undertaking and the associated precautions they must take. Limits should be set as to what can and cannot be done while working alone.

Employees engaged in lone work must be competent to deal with circumstances that are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, for example when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor or how to handle aggression. (See further information below).

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still the Authority's duty to ensure they are healthy and safe at work. Supervision can help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary health and safety precautions are properly carried out.

Supervisors can also provide guidance in situations where there is uncertainty. Supervision of health and safety can often be carried out when checking the progress and quality of the work for example. This may take the form of periodic site visits combined with discussions in which health and safety issues are raised.

The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues. Employees new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job that presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied at first.

The level of supervision required is a management decision, which should be based on the findings of a risk assessment: the higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they require assistance.

Training for personal safety and dealing with aggression

There are increased risks to lone workers in some circumstances from aggressive behaviour and violence. Those whose work involves cash handling, prevention of theft from or damage to PDNPA property, or enforcement of planning decisions and by-laws for example, are likely to be at greater risk when working alone. Routine work involving owners, tenants, and members of the public may on occasions become confrontational. Employees working alone may also be subject to increased risks from assault, and although evidence suggests that actual incidents in the UK are comparatively few, the perception of risk is significant.

Heads of Service are responsible for identifying the need to provide training for staff identified as being at risk. Existing PDNPA guidance on personal safety and dealing with aggression and violence is available separately.

6. MONITORING LONE WORKERS AND EMERGENCIES

Procedures need to be in place to monitor lone workers to see they remain safe. This is an essential part of providing a safe system of work.

Further information on a range of tasks and suitable methods of monitoring and communications are included in the Appendices to this Code of Practice.

Monitoring systems may include:

- Regular contact between the lone worker and their supervisor, or with colleagues, either in person or by telephone or radio (see also 'the buddy system' below);
- Automatic warning devices which operate if specific signals are not received periodically from a lone worker;
- Checks that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task.

Whichever system is used it must be suitable and sufficient in the circumstances. That means that it is both practicable and robust in terms of use. Consider in particular the coverage of mobile phone networks and radio reception 'black-spots' and the performance of equipment provided. It is crucial that any systems implemented also have sufficient resource to ensure they are operated correctly. If people are expected to call in during the working day or at the end of a task consider who they will call and how you ensure that person will be available? Consider also how robust

and well resourced the system is to react appropriately when a call is either not made or an alarm is raised?

The system for monitoring lone workers is one of the key control measures employed and should be properly referred to on the risk assessment.

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. A key requirement for lone work is the training and information a lone worker has received to ensure their competence to deal with any foreseeable event. The risk assessment should refer to emergency action that the lone worker may need to implement. Consider in particular how a lone worker will receive first-aid or medical attention in case of accident or illness?

The 'Buddy' system

A buddy system is a tracing system involving staff, volunteers and others partnering up with each other and passing on information such as where they are lone working, what they are doing and importantly, when they are leaving or expected back. The 'buddy' takes responsibility for contacting the other person if they have not returned back or phoned in, then raises the alarm should the need arise.

It is important to state that there is no set 'buddy' system and that there is not necessarily a need for a formal system to be set up for every lone work situation. In circumstances where someone is working on their own, but is not particularly at risk or strictly 'alone', for example driving on a public road, then a pre-arranged system is probably unnecessary. Systems should be devised to suit the circumstances. They should not be overly complicated or they will not be used. The buddy system will be only one element of your safe system of work and it is likely that other elements of Section 4 of this guidance will be needed to ensure staff and volunteers remain safe. All the elements of Section 4 needed to complete a safe system of work must be recorded on the risk assessment. Detailed suggestions below should help you devise a buddy system, where necessary, to suit your particular needs. The system should normally be operated in pairs or more, and must be written down.

- a) Who could be your 'Buddy'?

 - Your colleague
 - Your partner at home
 - Other responsible person

If your partner or another non-PDNPA person is to be your buddy, they must be given contact details of PDNPA staff they can contact if they need to raise the alarm if the lone worker does not phone in or return home. The member of staff contacted must then take over and manage the situation.

When your Buddy is unavailable a second Buddy should be used. If no one is available, lone working should not take place.

- b) Before lone working
 - Check the Buddy is available to operate the system;
 - Give the Buddy the following information:
 - The nature of the work;
 - The location of the work (grid reference or GPS coordinates if necessary);
 - Mode of travel, and route to and from the work area;
 - The description of the vehicle and registration number if applicable;
 - Departure time and estimated time of return.
- c) During lone working
 - Where possible, any changes, particularly late return, should be communicated to your Buddy;

- Where practical, line managers should consider visiting the lone worker during the day.
- d) On return from lone working
- The lone worker should ensure that the Buddy is made aware of his/her safe return;
 - If returning back within work hours - phone Buddy at work;
 - If returning back outside work hours - phone Buddy at home, or as prearranged.

e) Role of Buddy if lone worker fails to return

If the lone worker has not called in to notify his/her return, take the following action:

- Phone the lone worker's work number or home number as agreed.
- Wait an agreed period of time, depending on the nature of the work and the area (a maximum of 1 hour is suggested). During this time check the lone worker's home number at 15 minute intervals.
- If the Buddy is not a PDNPA employee, he/she should contact the lone worker's line manager or other agreed member of staff who will take responsibility for further action.
- If the Buddy is a PDNPA employee, he/she should firstly advise the lone worker's line manager, then contact another member of staff and together visit the last known destination of the lone worker, and as far as is practical check the location where the work was being carried out. Another member of staff should be tasked with continuing attempts to contact the lone worker's home number.
- If this does not result in contact with the lone worker within an agreed time (maximum 2 hours), notify the relevant emergency services, who will implement emergency procedures. Senior management should also be contacted at this stage if not already involved.

7. REVIEW OF THIS CODE OF PRACTICE

The Safety Officer will review this Code of Practice every two years unless a significant change is identified in the interim.

Appendix A

Lone Working

(Generic version 1 – See notes overleaf)

Site: Any	Date		
Main work activities: All			
Maximum number of people exposed: 1 Category, (skilled, visitor, trainee etc.): Any Age range: All Frequency and duration of exposure: Daily – upwards			
Hazards/risks identified: Principle general hazards to consider for lone working include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accident/injury or sudden acute illness 2. Dangerous activity/occurrence requiring assistance 3. Vulnerability to attack by other persons or animals <p><i>NB Certain activities may not be safely carried out by lone workers. These and many other potentially hazardous activities may require specific risk assessments and controls that fall beyond the scope of this general assessment for lone workers.</i></p>			
Current action taken to reduce the risk (if any): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The lone worker is capable of undertaking the work without assistance 2. The lone worker is aware of the hazards 3. The lone worker knows what to do in an emergency 4. Another person knows the whereabouts of the lone worker and how to contact them <p>Risk assessment (taking account of existing controls): <u>Delete as appropriate (see notes overleaf)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A serious risk remains requiring immediate action as detailed below 2. A significant risk remains and will be further dealt with as detailed below 3. This is considered a low/acceptable risk that is currently sufficiently well controlled 			
Agreed new/additional control measures:	When	Who	Done

Completed by:

Where ever possible you should involve your team in the risk assessment and gain their commitment to control measures.

General Guidance

Notes on risk assessment and completion of this form

NB This is a generic risk assessment for guidance only. Further or different controls may be necessary for specific individuals and jobs. This assessment should be modified and personalised accordingly.

1. This form should be used to specify the controls that are in place to deal with any identified hazard where some significant risk of harm/damage or loss is identified.
2. A judgement of significant risk may be made through experience of previous incidents, official guidance on risks associated with certain activities or through individual expertise and advice.
3. A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm/damage or loss. Examples include: electricity, vehicles, anything very hot or very cold, any sharp or pointed instrument or object, something very heavy/awkward that must be moved, something toxic or caustic, flammable or dangerous substances.
4. The risk calculation is a subjective process to determine whether those with responsibility are satisfied that the controls in place, with respect to a particular hazard, are sufficient to avoid an incident or to make an incident sufficiently unlikely. In certain cases reference to statutory requirements may be necessary.
5. Those carrying out the risk assessment should be competent to do so. Competence is the ability to profile the risks in operational activities and then apply the right measures to control and manage those risks. In case of doubt, advice should be sought from the Safety Officer or others as appropriate.

Specific Guidance - Lone Working

- k) The person must be **capable of undertaking the work required without assistance**. This includes considering any known medical conditions which may make them unsuitable for working alone generally, or for one specific lone working scenario. Does the work impose any additional physical or mental burden on the individual? Other tasks might not be appropriate for those suffering conditions such as severe allergic reactions to stings (anaphylactic shock), vertigo or claustrophobia. Are women or young persons working alone at particular risk?
- l) The lone worker must be fully **aware of the hazards** they are likely to encounter whilst undertaking a specific lone working task, as well as the general hazards that lone working presents. They must appreciate the level of risk that these hazards present and importantly the precautions to take and systems to follow to ensure that they stay safe.
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- o) Where the lone working presents a significant risk, the **risks from lone working situations should be assessed** using the established risk assessment procedures. For some activities, the risk assessment for lone working will be a separate risk assessment in its own right, whilst in other circumstances it could form part of a broader risk assessment dealing with a particular work activity or event.

Once completed a risk assessment may prohibit lone working and identify alternative working methods. Other assessments may identify special precautions including those for new or inexperienced staff such as, increased supervision and/or training. The person responsible should be satisfied that the end result of any assessment and implementation of controls provides a safe system of work.

Lone working is prohibited for some work by legislation and/or by the PDNPA

If in doubt seek further advice from the PDNPA Safety Officer