



**Plastica Ltd**

## **Lone Working Policy**

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## 1.0 General Statement of Policy

Lone working within the Company is discouraged, although certain staff may need to work alone on occasions.

Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Supervisor/Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety Policy.

This policy is designed to alert staff 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 not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

We understand that the following legislation applies to us:

Legislation	Key Requirements
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	Employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees.
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	Employers are required to carry out risk assessments, make arrangements to implement necessary measures, appoint competent people and arrange for appropriate information and training.
The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992	These Regulations cover a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare issues.
The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981	These Regulations require employers to provide access to First Aid.

This policy applies to all employees.

## 2.0 Definition

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone, are physically isolated from colleagues or direct supervisors and without access to immediate assistance or when working from home without access to other members of the household.

## 3.0 Security of Buildings

Supervisors/Manager and their employees must ensure that:

### **3.1 Perimeter House Site**

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building and that emergency exits are accessible.
- Alarm systems are tested regularly – both fire and intruder
- When working alone they are familiar with exits and alarms
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering.
- Challenge any unknown visitors – all visitors must always sign in and display their visitors' badge
- External doors and gate are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone
- Staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures.

### **3.2 Working alone at another building/location**

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building/room and that emergency exits are accessible.
- They are familiar with fire, and if applicable, intruder alarm procedure and know the location of both exits and alarms
- If available, they know the emergency contact on site.
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit where applicable
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering.
- Staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures.
- Whenever possible that they park in a well lit and busy area.
- Ensure any sign in and sign out procedures are followed.

## **4.0 Personal Safety**

Plastica Ltd have a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff, but employees also have a duty of care to themselves.

- Staff should avoid working alone if not necessary and where possible the final two people should leave together.
- Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any circumstances.
- Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Supervisor/Manager. The job must be able to be done safely if working alone is to be agreed.
- Staff must use the Time & Attendance system to log their entry and exit times if applicable.
- Staff must inform their Supervisor/Manager or other Manager/Director if direct Supervisor/Manager is not available, when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to the office.

- If a member of staff does not report in as expected an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary.
- Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team
- Staff must have access to a telephone and first aid kit.
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, staff must call for assistance before entering.
- Staff working away from the office should ensure they have access to a mobile phone at all times. Check that the phone is in working order, charged and with sufficient credit.
- Staff driving, should refer to HS&E07 Driving At Work Policy and HS&E08 Driver Handbook for security whilst in a vehicle.

## 5.0 Assessment of Risk

In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, 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 and the nature of the person (e.g. any individual vulnerabilities)
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations
- Any other special circumstances

All available information should be taken into account and checked or 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.

Whilst every measure will be taken to identify all risks prior to the lone working, it is important that the staff member is able to assess any unexpected risks. If the staff member identifies a risk and cannot avoid the risk, they must cease the task immediately and contact their Supervisor/Manager for advice.

All lone workers must read, understand, sign and return a copy of the general Lone Working Risk Assessment.

**See Appendix A – Five-Step Risk Assessment for Lone Working**

## 6.0 Planning

- Staff should be fully briefed in relation to the risk as well as to the task itself.
- Communication, checking-in and fallback arrangements must be in place. Staff should ensure that someone is always aware of their movements and expected return/completion.
- The Supervisor/Manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the staff member.

## **6.1 Communication and checking-in arrangements if working alone at Perimeter House**

If due to unavoidable circumstances you need to work within your department, at the Perimeter House site, by yourself you can only continue to work under the following circumstances:

### **Mornings Before 8am:**

1. If the Moulding Department are working. You must pre-arrange for them to phone you every thirty minutes or alternatively they should come and find you every thirty minutes. If they have not made contact after thirty five minutes you must go and find them to establish contact or;
2. If at least one other department is working overtime. If you are working in clear view of others no further action is necessary. If this is not the case a rota must be agreed beforehand with the chosen department on who checks on who every thirty minutes. Again, if contact hasn't been made after thirty minutes the recipient must seek out the caller to establish contact.

### **Evenings after 5pm or weekend working:**

1. At least one other department or person is also working. If you are working in clear view of others no further action is necessary. If not, a rota must be agreed beforehand with the chosen department on who checks on who every thirty minutes. Again, if contact hasn't been after thirty minutes the recipient must seek out the caller. The main gates must be shut after 5pm. When leaving the building you must confirm to another department that you are no longer working. The final person leaving the building should not be alone and two people must lock up together.

If none of the above criteria can be met then you will not be allowed to continue working under any circumstances and alternative arrangements will need to be made.

## **6.2 Staff working in remote areas**

Where a staff member is going to be working or travelling through a remote area where there may be little access to services, and there may be no mobile phone signal this will be reflected in the assessment of risk and steps will be taken to reduce the risk. Individuals should inform a family member or friend of their planned journey as an extra precaution. A vehicle monitoring tracker will be fitted to vehicles owned by Plastica to assist in locating employees.

Staff working in remote areas should be in regular contact with their Supervisor/Manager or other designated person.

## **6.3 Staff working at home**

Staff working from home should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.

Staff working from home should be in regular contact with their Supervisor/Manager or other designated person.

Staff working from home should be aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on the Caller Display and can be retrieved from 1471. To prevent the person you call accessing your number dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile phone.

## **7.0 Monitoring and Review**

Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should discuss these with their Supervisor/Manager as soon as possible.

## **8.0 Failure to follow the policy**

Supervisors/Managers failing to follow this policy will be subject to our disciplinary procedure. In certain circumstances this could be classed as gross misconduct and could lead to their dismissal.

Staff failing to following this policy or being aware that their Supervisor/Manager is failing to follow this procedure and not notifying a more senior manager of that failure will be subject to our disciplinary procedure. In certain circumstances this could be classed as gross misconduct and could lead to their dismissal.

## **Appendix A – Five-Step Risk Assessment for Lone Working**

RA08 Lone Working Risk Assessment and RA19 Working From Home Risk Assessment are available to use. If they do not cover the lone working arrangement a Lone Working Risk Assessment must be carried out by a trained Supervisor/Manager/Director prior to the lone working taking place. It must be carried out in consultation with the staff member who will be working alone, taking into account their opinion and ability to do the task/job.

The following simple five-step risk assessment from the HSE will help you to assess the risk of a lone working task.

### **1. Identify the hazards**

As a first step, you should identify any possible hazards by examining the nature of the task/job in the context of it being done alone;

- the type of clients or customers the employee may work with or may encounter;
- the places, locations, times and environments that are relevant;
- the views of the staff; and
- incident reports, including any near misses.

### **2. Decide who might be harmed and how**

Next, think about which staff and types of employees might be harmed whilst working alone?

- what type of injury or ill health might occur – for example, through violence if employees are attacked;
- through hostage taking or false imprisonment; or by doing something against the customer's wishes?

### **3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions**

In this third step, you should:

- decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or more should be done;
- whether or not the risks are low or acceptable;
- establish if there are systems in place aimed at eliminating or reducing the risk, and whether or not you have clear risk assessments;
- find out if staff have skills in defusing situations;
- discover if your company has a clear policy, procedure and guidelines for visiting or dealing with clients while alone;
- find out if there is a clear audit trail to ensure colleagues know the whereabouts of an employee in the event of non-return to the office or reporting back to head office; and
- establish if staff have personal alarms, mobile telephones or mobile panic alarms that can alert the employer to the employee's location.

#### **4. Record your findings on the Risk Assessment Template (found on the Company Intranet) and implement them**

At this stage, you should:

- complete a risk assessment
- design an action plan
- communicate the information to employees

#### **5. Review your assessment and update if necessary**

Step five ensures you keep your action plan up to date by:

- reviewing the plan on a regular basis, but at least once a year;
- changing and amending the plan as required; and
- ensuring the action plan is completed and implemented.