



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to describe the measures that Gillingham Town Council considers necessary to manage the risk presented to employees when they are required to work alone.

Working alone is not itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. There is no specific legislation for working alone but it is recognised that lone working can create additional risks. Legislation which applies to employees who work alone includes Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 which places a duty on every employer to ensure, as far as it is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty on the employer to consider all reasonable, foreseeable hazards and to take the appropriate action to reduce the possible risk of injury to the lowest level that is practicable to achieve.

Employees and volunteers have a responsibility to take care of themselves and others in lone working situations.

2. Definition

`Lone working` refers to a person who works by themselves without work colleagues, without direct or close supervision, either during or outside normal working hours.

3. Policy

The Council will, as far as it is reasonably practicable, ensure that:

- Employees required to work alone are protected from risks to their health, safety and welfare
- Employees take responsibility for their own safety and understand that they must remove themselves from any situation where they are at risk. Such action and concerns must be reported immediately to their Line Manager.

4. Who is at risk?

All employees who, as part of their contractual duties, are required to work alone and without direct supervision.

This policy does not identify all the situations where employees may be at risk from working alone but concentrates on describing the arrangements that must be in place to eliminate or manage the associated risks. It is important that individuals are made aware of the outcome of the risk assessment and informed of all necessary control measures.

5. Assessing the risk

Line Managers are responsible for identifying and assessing the risk of lone working in terms of the likelihood of causing harm and also the severity of the injury. Consideration will be given to whether the activity is one that can be safely accomplished by one person or whether the presence of another member of staff would be advisable. If a risk cannot be eliminated completely, action must be taken to reduce the risk to the lowest level practicably achievable.

6. Specific Guidance

Line Managers and other staff should take account of the following factors when evaluating the risk:

- The degree of isolation
- The type of work activity
- The level of supervision and support
- Contact or proximity with members of the public

Any person who is recruited for a job likely to involve lone working must declare if they have any medical disability that may put them at risk whilst working alone (eg hearing or visual impairment, diabetes etc). A first aid kit should always be available to render first aid for minor injuries, should they be sustained.

Lone working at the Town Hall will be carried out as a last resort. If workers at the Town Hall find themselves in a position of lone working, they must lock the external doors to ensure their safety and only invite visitors into the office who they are familiar with.

Lone workers must contact a person nominated by their Line Manager before they finish work for the day if they intend to go home directly from their position, without seeing another member of staff. If planning to work out of standard hours, this must be agreed in advance by the Town Clerk.

7. Duties of the Line Manager

To fulfil its statutory duties, the Council places specific duties on its Line Managers to ensure:

- All lone working activities are formally identified, and appropriate risk assessments undertaken, which identify the risk to lone workers and the control measure necessary to minimise those risks, as far as reasonably practicable.
- Arrangements for lone working are communicated effectively and the detail of what can and cannot be done while working along is explicit.
- The lone worker is made aware of the hazards and understand all the necessary control measure that need to be put in place.
- Reasonable enquires are made to ensure that the lone worker is medically fit to undertake lone working.
- Adequate supervision, instruction and training is in place and that the lone working is competent. The extent of the supervision is a management decision, which should be established through a risk assessment process.
- Monitoring of lone working practices is in place to ensure that control measure identified in the lone working risk assessments are being adhered to

8. Employees' duties

All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own safety and to co-operate with council procedures.

If a person finds that they are placed in a situation which may be considered to be that of lone working, then they should ensure that their line manager is made aware of the circumstances at the earliest opportunity and then assist in the process of identifying the steps needed to either prevent the lone working situation from arising, or if this is not possible, assist in developing the precautions necessary to ensure their own safety.

Lone workers have a responsibility to inform their line manager if they have any concerns other the effectiveness and efficient of the agreed arrangements and if there are any reasons why they would not be able to work alone or continue to work alone in safety.

9. Risk assessment

The risk assessment process will be undertaken as a collaborative exercise by the lone worker and the line manager. The agreed safe working procedures will be recorded and communicated to all persons who may be required to work alone and any other employees who have a role in ensuring their safety.

The following outlines the steps that must be taken for a lone working risk assessment:

1. Identify the hazard to which the person may be exposed.
2. Consider whether the hazards are likely to be the same for a particular activity if lone working or not.
3. The assessment of the risks to which a lone worker may be exposed must consider normal and foreseeable scenarios.
4. The hazards may be such that the risk cannot be controlled sufficiently and therefore lone working is prohibited. Examples of high-risk activities where at least one other person will need to be present include:
 - Working on or near water
 - Using power tools and machinery
 - Working at height
 - Involving chemicals which are corrosive, toxic, explosive, flammable or asphyxiant products or reactions.
 - Working in confined spaces (as defined in the Confined Spaces Regulations 1997).

10. Control Measures

Control measures may include (but are not limited to):

- Provision of a safe system of work
- Provision of necessary and relevant training
- Provision of first aid and emergency first aid at work training for relevant staff
- Provision of first aid kits
- Ensuring that staff are fully trained for the task

- Providing staff with a radio when working alone
- The health of the lone worker: do they have any medical condition or a disability which would make them unsuitable or unsafe for working alone?
- Arrangements for dealing with emergencies
- Arrangements for dealing with threats of violence

11. Record the findings

The Line Manager must record the risk assessment finding for any significant risks identified and ensure that the lone worker is made aware of the findings of the risk assessment.

12. Monitoring and review

Risk assessments are to be reviewed if any significant changes take place, following an accident or incident or following concerns being raised. Any review should make sure existing control measures are adequate and check if any additional controls are needed.

13. Policy Review

This Lone Working Policy was review by the Finance and Policy Committee on 15 May 2023 Minute no 532a and ratified by Full Council on 22 May 2023.

This policy will be reviewed by the Finance and Policy Committee biennially or when there are changes to legislation, whichever is the sooner.

Signed by The Mayor of Gillingham:

Date: