Lone Working Policy

July | 2016

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers in order to reduce the risks of lone working as far as is reasonably possible and practicable.

Definitions

Lone Worker

A lone worker is anyone who works in isolation from their colleagues without close or direct supervision. Examples include:

- Receptionist – Gracefield Gardens
- Drivers
- Doctors

People in fixed establishments

- People working separately from others – reception areas
- People who work from home
- People working outside normal hours - out of hours health care

Mobile workers working away from their fixed base

- Service workers - social workers, home helps, doctors, district nurses, receptionists, drivers

Scope

Own Employees

This Policy applies to all employees permanent or temporary of SELDOC and includes any agency, or visiting professionals contracted to provide services on SELDOC's behalf.

Contractors

This Policy also applies to participating Independent Contractors and their employed staff.

Legal requirements - Applicable Laws

SELDOC has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of their employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999 places a duty on employers, to identify significant risks within the organisation and implement suitable risk treatments, to reduce those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Places of Work

Where workers are on premises where someone other than their employer has control, their safety is the responsibility of the main occupier of those premises provided that the occupier is also an employer or conducting an undertaking there. (S.3 (2) of the Act.

Where an employer does not exercise control over the premises it is more difficult to ensure a safe and healthy environment. Regulation 10 of MHSWR requires employers (including self employed i.e. Independent Contractors) to provide comprehensible information on health and safety for others who are working on or visiting their premises.

Personal responsibility

Section 7 of the act requires employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

This policy and supporting training should ensure that such persons do not take short cuts or employ dangerous practices but that they are instructed to consider and identify potential hazards and to implement a form of risk assessment to ensure the safety of themselves and any of other persons they may be working with.

Working outside normal hours (OOH)

Where a person is required or requests to work outside normal working hours and alone, it is necessary to identify the degree of risk in assessing whether or not this is a safe practice. Regulation 3 of MHSWR states that employers must make a "suitable and sufficient" assessment of any risks to the health and safety of their employees. Any such risks identified are likely to be greater for lone workers. These findings must be recorded on the risk assessment documents provided as part of your Health and Safety policy.

Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff who work alone are not exposed to risks to their Health and Safety and to

outline the steps to reduce and improve personal safety to staff who work alone.

The policy also aims through it's rollout to raise awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.

HR & senior management are available to provide advice to managers or staff on any aspect of the policy and procedure.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to ensure:
- Lone workers are identified
- Risks inherent in lone worker situations are assessed and suitable precautionary measures taken
- There is a local safe system of work which
- Records the whereabouts of lone workers
- Tracks the movement of lone workers
- Follows an agreed system for locating staff who deviate from their expected movement pattern
- Identifies when lone working is no longer appropriate

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is the overall process of performing a systematic written risk analysis and risk evaluation in order to identify methods to control the severity of the risk. Risks to be assessed during the process include:

- Violence and Aggression
- Isolated areas/ difficult terrain
- Sudden illness
- Building condition
- Substances Hazardous to Health

This list is not exhaustive and other risks may be identified during the assessment process.

Safe System of Work

Classification; A method of working which addresses risks that cannot be controlled in any other way. Safe systems of work are dynamic systems, which means they should be constantly monitored to identify weakness and improve methods of controlling the risk. Localised protocols such as a "buddy system" for safe working should be considered and encouraged.

Systems of work should be designed to reduce the need for lone working where possible. If this is not possible, safe work practices should be implemented, in line with the findings of a general risk assessment, to avoid or minimise the

possibility of abuse. Radios, personnel attack alarms, mobile phones and physical barriers should only be used in conjunction with safe practice.

Organisational responsibilities

Responsibilities for the health and safety of lone workers are allocated as follows:

Senior Management

- Ensure the management of Lone Working within the Organisation is adhered to under the Health and Safety Policy.
- Maintain a log of the locations of employees considered to be lone workers.
- Maintain contact with staff that work alone, both internally and externally.
- Implement systems to identify those staff who do not report or return at the expected time.
- Ensure systems are in place to take action to contact / locate staff that have failed to make contact or return at the expected time.
- Raise the appropriate level of alert / alarm and inform the manager on call if staff cannot be contacted / located within [a defined period] after the expected time of contact or return.
- If staff cannot be located, then contacting the police.
- Monitoring feedback from the organisation on lone worker risk and seeking to improve processes.
- Monitor and update this policy as appropriate
- Training.

Other Managers

To identify all staff likely to work regularly in isolation from their colleagues

To assess the risks that such lone working presents

Having assessed the risks, to decide whether lone working is reasonable or not in these situations

To report to the line Manager any situation where the risks cannot be controlled

If lone working is considered reasonable, then the manager must ensure that suitable precautions are in place, such as:

- Mobile telephones/radios
- Team working
- Giving information on known risks
- Reporting in procedures

- Personal alarms
- Recording identified risks on the local risk register.
- To ensure all staff that work alone are made aware of this policy.
- To support staff who are victims of violence and aggression through the staff counselling service and in line with the organisational policy.

Employees

- Complete the Lone Working In/Out of the workplace training
- Identify any activity carried out by them which will involve them working alone for more than one hour.
- Comply with any precautionary measures including guidelines laid down by managers such as a "buddy system".
- Provide any of the following information that may be needed to set up a safe system of work:
- Working alone at the beginning and end of the normal working hours
- Notifying any changes to the daily out of base work plan (i.e. ad-hoc or "spur of the moment" visits).
- Informing key person ("buddy") on return to base.
- Report to their managers any unsafe or potentially unsafe situations, and to report incidents in which violence or aggression or threats using the incident reporting procedure.
- Take reasonable care for their own safety and not expose them to unnecessary risk.
- To attend any training provided.

Health and Safety Management

Provide advice and information to managers and employees on matters of personal safety as arranged through the Service Level Agreement.

Financial Implications

Costs associated with the Lone Worker Policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the Senior Management & Operations Team. This includes:

- Cost of monitoring and alerting systems
- Mobile phone costs
- Costs of safe parking
- Training
- Risk assessment
- Doubling-up on staff where needed for appointments

Neither list is intended to be exhaustive.

References to other policies within the Organisation

- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Incident Reporting Policy
- Violence and Aggression Policy
- Security Policy
- Pregnant workers' Policy
- Lone Working In/Out of the Workplace (provided by iHasco Training)