

LONE WORKER PROCEDURE

(Revised Version Approved Health and Safety , Heads of Services Working Group 21 February 2008)

The council recognises and acknowledges its responsibility to identify those working on their own ("Lone Workers) and its legal and moral obligations to introduce control measures to ensure that a safe working environment can be maintained. This code of practice (COP) defines how Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) will manage "lone workers". The Code covers a wide and diverse range of situations and employees.

In order to provide a more secure environment for isolated workers Great Yarmouth Borough Council has purchased the Orbis Lone Worker System as it offers a range of options to enable, where required, the type that best meets the needs of employees to be used. In particular, it ensures that if the worst case scenario does happen, there is a 24 hour service of trained staff available to get help to the person concerned.

Employees identified as requiring the Orbis Lone Worker System are expected to utilise the system as provided to them.

1 Definitions

1.1 Lone Worker

Lone Working means carrying out normal duties without a colleague or close supervision, usually at locations away from the Town Hall Administrative centre, Maltings House or a fixed base. The definition of a Lone Worker is 'any employee who works alone without a colleague or direct supervision or control during the performance of their task'.

These persons can be summarised as follows:

- An employee who works alone for long periods without contact with, or in the presence of, others e.g. toilet attendants, bailiffs etc.
- An employee who works alone but makes calls or has frequent contact with others at predetermined locations e.g. Environmental Health staff, Housing Officers etc.
- An employee who works alone but in a public place and has contact with, or is normally in the presence of others e.g. lifeguard, Car Park Supervisor etc.

There are many jobs within the Council that fall within this definition. It is important to note that not everyone will be a Lone Worker at all times in their job or require the need for the Orbis Lone Working system. This does not however exclude them from the above definition; therefore all periods of possible lone work for all jobs must be identified and assessed through the risk assessment process.

1.2 Employee

The term “employee” includes all levels of the organisation including managers and supervisors, including full-time and part-time employees, any person working under casual, voluntary or work experience arrangements and any other person for whom GYBC has a direct or indirect responsibility.

1.3 Working hours

This covers any duty undertaken on any day on behalf of GYBC at any time of day or night.

1.4 Violence and aggression

Any incident where the victim considers they have been abused (verbal/physical), threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. (see the Health and Safety policy Appendix 4 and 6).

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Line Manager

The Line Manager must ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees who report to them. To achieve this,

- an assessment must be conducted of the employee’s work to identify the work they undertake, as detailed in the Council’s Health and Safety Policy.
- A monitoring process must be conducted to ensure they are following this policy and any other procedures

2.2 Employees

Employees have a duty to look after their personal health and safety and to co-operate with their manager in order to assist them to meet their Health and Safety responsibilities.

Employees to produce, and make available, a visit list containing all the premises to be visited that day, where appropriate.

3 Training

3.1 Employees

Each employee, whose duties required them to work alone, must receive awareness training and information on the risks associated with their work activity. Each employee should also be informed of any specific requirements for the management of risk.

4 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

4.1 Suitable PPE

Suitable PPE must be issued to an employee where the risk assessment has shown it to be necessary for personal safety. (For example a personal attack alarm and mobile phone may be identified as necessary PPE for an employee carrying out lone worker duties).

4.2 Work Activities

The work activities being undertaken should identify other PPE necessary, e.g. gloves, eye protection etc, to carry out the task safely. Where PPE is issued each employee should receive appropriate training in the correct application and use of the equipment.

5 First Aid

5.1 Responding to Emergencies

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. Risk Assessment should identify foreseeable events. Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a basic first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries to themselves. Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that a lone worker may need formal training in first aid especially where a work process is associated with a physical risk, e.g. sharps collection, waste investigation. Lone workers are not expected to and should not administer first aid to others unless they are trained and insured to do so.

6 Accident, Dangerous Occurrence and Violence Reporting

6.1 All Incidences

All accidents, dangerous occurrences or violence to an employee working away from the office must be reported to their manager. The appropriate form must be completed and returned to the Head of Environment and Health by the relevant Service Unit Manager in accordance with the Council's Health and Safety Policy.

7 Transport

7.1 Use of Vehicles

Employees using a lease vehicle or their own transport whilst travelling to carry out duties away from the office, must have a valid driving licence and be covered by relevant insurance for use at work. Any changes which may affect the employees' ability to use a vehicle must be reported to their manager. (See Health and Safety Policy Appendix 8: The Use of Vehicles at Work Driving Policy)

8 Records

8.1 Risk Assessment

Where a risk assessment identifies the need for a documented system to manage the risk to lone workers, records must be kept of all employee training and equipment used.

9 Incidents of Violence and Aggression

9.1 General Advice (also refer to the Councils Health and Safety Policy)

Unfortunately it is not always possible to predict aggression or violence but in most cases there is a gradual escalation of events. All threats of aggression or violence must be taken seriously, as should the production of a weapon or potential weapon.

Individuals respond differently when under threat and it is difficult to set out exact remedies for action. Where, as an employee, you are clearly threatened you should try to calm the person down and defuse the situation. At the same time you must plan how to summon assistance and exit from the locality. Not easy but, try to remain calm; try not to panic; try not to react with aggression.

9.2 Training

All employees should have received training and information, where relevant, to enable them to deal with potentially violent situations. If a violent situation arises the primary aim is to achieve personal safety and a safe withdrawal from the situation.

9.3 Reporting the incident

On return to the office report verbally to the Line Manager and complete the report form in accordance with the Council's Health and Safety Policy. Where there has been an incident considered serious by the person affected, the Police should always be contacted by the '999' number prior to a call to the relevant line manager.

10 “Confined Space” Working

10.1 Where not to Work

(Health and Safety Regulations- Confined Space means a location with restricted access where there is a risk of serious injury from hazardous substances or dangerous conditions)

Under no circumstances should an employee enter a “confined space” alone without a proper risk assessment and PPE. A confined space can include: sewers, tanks, manholes, cellars, roof spaces, or anywhere there is restricted height, movement and ventilation.

11 Mobile Phones

11.1 Use Of Mobile Phones

Mobile phones must be checked prior to any visit to ensure that they are working correctly, and the battery fully charged. They must not be used whilst in control of a vehicle including driving in slow moving traffic, standing at traffic lights or where petroleum or gas fumes may be around. Mobile phones will be issued to all staff covered by this policy.

12 Routine Visits/Inspections/Investigations

12.1 The Line Manager should:

- Keep themselves aware of information regarding person's known to pose a potential threat to an employee of the Council.
- Ensure that their staff are similarly informed.
- Ensure that a proper risk assessment is carried out in relation to any visits involving contact with such persons.
- Where high risk of violence exists but action is necessary in the public interest, then an alternative approach should be adopted such as by involving the police and / or the visit being made by two or more employees. An interview in the office may be appropriate.
- Monitor team members to ensure they are following this policy and any relevant procedures

12.2 Employees must:

- Ensure that actions taken by them are proportional to the situation so as not to aggravate matters and run the risk of a violent response.
- Employees should try to remain aware of changes in a person's behaviour that may indicate the possibility of violence. These may include becoming agitated, raising of their voice, pointing, gesticulating, use of strong language, etc. In these cases always walk away from a confrontational situation. Re-assess the situation and adopt a different approach in dealing with the problem.
- Not easy but avoid meeting aggression with aggression and endeavour to negotiate or de-fuse the situation.

13 Fire

13.1 When a situation arises involving a fire whilst you are on another premises, employees must exit the building in a safe manner and follow instructions from Fire Stewards and others managing the situation.

14 Unoccupied / Derelict Premises and Sites

- 14.1 Employees should not enter unoccupied or derelict sites where their duties can be carried out just as effectively from outside the building or site.
- 14.2 Prior to entering into vacant premises or sites, employees must satisfy themselves as to the structural integrity of the premises and at no time should employees enter buildings they consider could be unstable or pose any other risk to their safety e.g. discarded needles.
- 14.3 Where a risk assessment indicates such, employees should always be accompanied when entering vacant premises or derelict sites.
- 14.4 If employees have any doubts about the structure, they must seek advice from their manager.
- 14.5 Employees should be aware of evidence of occupation and at no time should they enter buildings that may pose a risk to their safety.
- 14.6 When entering vacant premises employees should be aware of possible hazards such as, asbestos, missing floorboards, open trapdoors in floors, rot, loose or damaged ceilings, self locking doors, hypodermic needles, discarded sharps.
- 14.7 Any padlocks opened to gain access should be sprung shut before entering a site/premises so they can not be used to secure an exit route by others.

15 Isolated Locations within Occupied Premises

- 15.1 Under no circumstances should employees go into any occupied sites or premise without informing their Line Manager or responsible colleague that they are there and the purpose of their visit.
- 15.2 On occasions it may be necessary for employees to be isolated within premises and possibly alone. Escape routes should be identified during entry. Employers should always ensure that the occupier or person in control of the premises knows that they are on site and inform him/her the areas of the premises or site they need to go, in order to carry out their duties.
- 15.3 The occupier should always be asked:
- What hazardous areas or processes exist on the premises?
 - What PPE is necessary to be used? (for the employees safety)
 - What alarms or other warning devices are in use
 - What emergency or other procedures are in operation and is a site map available.
- 15.4 Whenever possible, employees should request to be accompanied by a member of

staff from the premises or site concerned. This is particularly important where the work may involve close proximity to hazardous materials, processes or machinery, or where there may be excessive high or low temperatures.

- 15.5 If employees need to enter into isolated areas unaccompanied they should inform the person in charge of the likely duration of their visit and request that the person in charge investigates in the event of the employee not returning by the expected time.

When leaving the site, employees must always inform the person in charge.

16 Orbis Lone Worker Procedure

- 16.1** There are a variety of Orbis Lone Worker Systems available and it is the responsibility of the manager and the member of staff to ensure that the correct one is selected for the type of work being undertaken
- 16.2** Employees using the system will be supported by a 24 hour service provided by the Orbis company using trained staff to monitor and respond appropriately to any calls given by the employee, whether it is a amber alert or full emergency request for help.
- 16.3** Managers and staff must ensure that Orbis' system has the up to date details for both the users of the system and the managers on the contact lists for providing emergency help, so that the Orbis staff member can make the correct actions in any emergency. In the event of a problem occurring personal details of the employee will be required to pass onto the police when they are involved. All users of the system must ensure their records are updated as and when personal details change e.g. change of address, car etc. These details will remain confidential