

Guidance on Lone working in HE

1.0 What is lone working?

This is work which is unaccompanied and where there is no immediate access to another person for assistance in the event of an accident or illness.

Lone working should be avoided if at all possible, because of the increased risks it may pose. However, it is recognised that there may be situations where lone working can not be avoided.

Lone working may occur because the location is remote from others or because the work is being done out of normal working hours, or both. Remoteness from others does not only happen when working off-site, since an individual could also be working in an otherwise unoccupied part of a building or area on a site. Examples of lone working would therefore include:

- Field work alone in a remote location*
- Social Science researchers interviewing people in their own homes or on the streets
- Experiments being done on site, but out of hours
- Security staff on patrol
- Maintenance staff working in remote areas of a building
- Staff working from home

Thus, almost any member of staff or student could become involved in lone working at times.

*General advice on fieldwork is provided in the CVCP publication, *Code of Practice for Safety in Fieldwork*.

2.0 Legal Requirements

2.1 General

Although there is no legal prohibition on lone working, the broad duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management Health and Safety at Work Regulations still apply. These require identifying hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks.

Employers have a legal duty to assess all risks to health and safety, including the risk of lone working. If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, then other arrangements must be put in place.

The following general duties of Employers also apply to lone workers:

- Facilities for First Aid under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations
- Facilities for welfare under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations
- Suitable equipment and training in their use under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations and the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations.
- Employers must also report certain accidents suffered by employees, including violent incidents, under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

In certain high risk activities there may be specific legal prohibitions on working alone e.g.

- Entry into confined spaces where there may be inadequate ventilation i.e. tanks, manholes, pipes, ducts and flues, enclosed basement rooms.
- Use of ladders which cannot be secured and require footing by a second person.
- Use of dangerous machinery where there is a risk of entrapment, entanglement, crushing, impact or injury from cutting or shearing, stabbing or puncture i.e. woodworking machinery, abrasive wheels, food preparation equipment, plastics processing machinery.
- Work on or near live, electrical conductors. The Electricity at Work Regulations give as examples the following where it is likely that the person carrying out the work should be accompanied

Electrical work involving manipulation of live, uninsulated power conductors, say at 240 volts using insulated tools

Other work on or near bare live conductors where a person working on his/her own would not be capable of undertaking the work safely without assistance in, for example, keeping other persons from the work area.

- Work in laboratories using certain chemicals including flammable, highly flammable or extremely flammable liquids, flammable gases, asphyxiants, toxic substances, corrosive substances

3.0 Risk Assessments

As with any risk assessment, the first step is to identify the hazards associated with the work. These may not be inherently different from those for a group of workers. The essential difference may be in the level of risk posed if the work is done alone, rather than by two or more people.

The types of hazard which often pose increased risks for lone workers include:

- Manual handling
- Hazardous substances
- Equipment and machinery
- Fire
- Transport
- Weather
- Locality, e.g. mountains, rivers,
- Violence
- Sudden illness
- Home conditions

The basic principle should be that any risks which are identified must be able to be adequately controlled by one person; the lone worker should not be exposed to greater risks than employees working together.

The types of question which the assessor should ask are given in the list below:

1. Does the work involve any activities for which lone working is legally prohibited?
2. Do access and egress present any additional risk to the solitary worker?
3. Does the work involve manually handling objects which are too heavy or awkward for one person?
4. If hazardous substances are involved, can their use be adequately controlled by one person?
5. If machinery and equipment are in use, does their design allow safe operation by one person? For instance, do the controls require more than one person for safe operation?
6. If any temporary access equipment is used, can it be safely handled and used by one person?
7. Are there any medical conditions [e.g. diabetes] which would put a lone worker at greater risk whilst doing the work in question?
8. Does the person have any disabilities which would place him or her at greater risk when lone working?
9. Is there a risk of violence to the lone worker [e.g. handling cash or interviewing potentially violent people]?
10. Is a woman working alone at any increased risk?
11. Is a young person working alone at any increased risk?
12. Are emergency arrangements in place which are suitable for the lone worker?

13. Is there appropriate first aid provision for the lone worker?
14. Is there access to adequate rest, hygiene, refreshment and welfare facilities?
15. If transport is required, does the method pose any increased risk for a lone person?

Once you have completed the evaluation of the risk, you must consider whether any additional control measures are required in order to reduce the risk sufficiently.

4.0 Control measures

You should first consider whether there is another reasonably practicable way of doing the task which does not require lone working. If there is, then it must be implemented.

4.1 Appropriate equipment and conditions

Legislation requires that equipment must be selected to ensure that it is suitable for the intended use and conditions. All safety considerations must be taken into account where equipment is used by a lone worker and appropriate British, European and International standards should be complied with.

- Equipment must be suitable for safe use by a lone worker.
- If equipment is hired, confirmation must be sought that it meets the appropriate standards and has been properly maintained.
- Equipment must be checked and tested before use by the lone worker and at appropriate predetermined intervals during use.
- Equipment must be maintained in a safe state by competent persons and damaged equipment suitably repaired or taken out of service.
- Where equipment is used by a lone worker they must be trained and competent to use it on their own.

The use of Firearms and explosives should be avoided. Where they are used by lone workers, they must only be used by competent persons and stored safely and securely. Licenses must be obtained as appropriate.

Appropriate conditions are:

- There is a safe means of entry and exit to the workplace
- There is adequate illumination, heating and ventilation for the job to be carried out.
- All equipment, especially power tools and access equipment such as ladders, can be used safely by a lone worker
- Lifting operations can be performed safely by one person who has undertaken suitable manual handling training

4.2 Permits to work

Permits to work can be particularly important in protecting the lone worker in certain potentially hazardous situations. Examples may include working at height, and working with certain chemicals. These are detailed written instructions provided by the employer for the lone worker on the performance of hazardous activities they should specify:-

- Check in arrangements
- Tests of communications equipment
- Length of the work period
- Suitable first aid equipment
- Equipment, tools and electrical safety checks
- Suitable personal protective equipment
- Suitable manual handling
- Arrangements in bad weather
- Exit to safety after job

4.3 Protective clothing

Where it has been identified by risk assessment, the lone worker must have access to adequate and appropriate protective clothing. The Risk Assessment must take into account the specific needs of the lone worker when deciding what is adequate. The Protective clothing must be checked regularly, maintained in good condition and worn correctly as required by current legislation. Equipment complying with appropriate British, European and International standards must be used wherever practicable.

4.4 Fitness to work alone

Medical fitness should not be a significant factor when considering typical office activities outside normal hours. However, in other situations it may be necessary to check that lone workers have no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone. Both routine work and foreseeable emergencies should be considered when assessing whether a person is medically fit to work alone. Emergencies may impose additional physical and

mental burdens on the individual. When medical advice is necessary, the Occupational Health Service should be consulted.

- does the job impose any extra demands on the lone workers physical or mental stamina
- does the lone worker suffer from any medical condition that might increase the risk of the job?

4.5 Communications

Appropriate communications should be maintained with the lone worker especially when continuing supervision is required. The lone worker should be equipped with a means of two-way communication, a pager or personal alarm. The system should enable the worker to raise an instant alarm or be located accurately if assistance is required. Rooms used for confidential interviews should be equipped with a hidden alarm.

(See Appendix 3 for some commercially available systems)

4.6 Information, Instruction and training

Sufficient training and information must be provided to the lone worker to enable them to identify hazards and take appropriate action to avoid them. They must be entitled to leave the workplace if there is serious and imminent danger.

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision in order to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. It may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations, and lone workers, therefore, need to understand fully the risks involved in the work, the necessary precautions and be sufficiently experienced. Departments should therefore establish clear procedures to set limits as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone and where appropriate when to stop and seek advice. Training must include the need to report any incidents which could effect their safety as such information is essential to the review of the adequacy of the working arrangements.

(See Appendix 5 for some training organisations)

4.7 Transport

If working away from the campus the lone worker must take appropriate care when using transport whether it is their own or public transport.

The lone worker should ensure: -

- They have adequate information as to the correct location of their work and a safe route to travel.
- Where using public transport they should ensure they have adequate information on timetables and know when the service terminates especially at night.
- That if using car parks they are well lit.
- They do not leave valuables visible within the car.
- Where a car is used, that it is in a good state of repair and that procedures have been put in place for what to do in the event of breakdown, accident or theft.

The employer has a responsibility to ensure that the car used is suitable, even when the employee uses their own car. They should ask to see the MOT, insurance and licence.

Where the lone worker is away from the campus procedures for the following will have to be defined: -

- The length of time the work should take and the frequency of reporting in during the absence from the campus.
- A safe means of travel to and from the location, especially out of hours

Special precautions will have to be considered if the worker is transporting hazardous items e.g. chemicals, cylinders etc. suitable warning signs must be displayed on the vehicle and COSHH information should be carried. In addition, the load carrying area must be appropriately separated from the seating area, to prevent the hazardous items intruding upon the occupants.

5.0 Supervision

Clearly, a lone worker is not subject to constant supervision. However, this does not mean that they can not or need not be supervised. The requirement for suitable and sufficient supervision remains as part of the legal duty of care owed by the Institution to its employees. The level and type of supervision

required should be decided by the supervisor in light of the risk assessment for the work. It should not be left to the lone worker to decide how much supervision they need. The proficiency and level of prior experience of the employee should also be taken into account.

The means by which supervisor may provide appropriate supervision include:

- Always accompanying persons who are new to a job, where the circumstances of the job have changed, or where there may be special risks until they are sufficiently trained and proficient to be allowed to work alone
- Periodic visits and observation of the worker during lone working.
- Regular, agreed contact by telephone or radio. If this is to be a mobile phone or radio, then adequacy of reception must be tested before commencement of lone working. Areas of poor reception may require use of a satellite phone, instead.
- Provision of automatic warning devices which operate if specific signals are not received. These may be based on agreed times of reporting
- Provision of alarms which can be operated in the case of an emergency. Such alarms can be operated manually or automatically in the absence of movement by the wearer.
- A system of informing the supervisor when the lone worker sets out on a task and of checking in when the person has safely returned to base or home after its completion.
- Signing in systems for lone workers on site. Signing-in systems are open to abuse and can be difficult to control, so need careful planning and monitoring. The use of such a system requires a procedure for actively checking the safety of those signed-in and the role of Security staff must be clearly set out and agreed.

6.0 Emergencies

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly in emergency situations. Emergency procedures should be established in departments and the appropriate persons given clear and concise training and instructions on how to implement them. Similar information should be given to contractors or service engineers who may be working alone.

Suitable systems should be devised to monitor the conditions of lone workers and include at least a check at the end of the working period. In addition, it may be necessary to consider:

- Procedures where a member of supervisory staff periodically visits and visually monitors lone workers.
- Procedures where regular contact between the lone worker and a member of supervisory or the security office is maintained using either a telephone or radio

- That in some areas to be visited it may not be possible to get a mobile signal and that the lone worker may need alternative means of making contact such as a phone card or charge. This should be checked prior to starting the lone working.
- Automatic warning devices which raise the alarm in an emergency and are activated by the absence of activity from the lone worker.
- The needs of disabled persons when working alone e.g. safe evacuation for wheelchair users and alternative alarm systems for the hearing impaired.
- Only using lifts fitted with alarms.

Accident reporting

Lone workers must be familiar with the appropriate accident reporting system within their organisation. It is essential that all accidents and near misses are reported and investigated as soon as possible. Serious accidents will have to be reported to the appropriate authorities therefore it is essential to obtain as much information as possible. Workers must be aware of emergency arrangements and how to contact the emergency services.

7.0 Monitoring & Review

It is important to remember that the effectiveness of any control measures which you put into place must be regularly monitored and any deficiencies which are revealed must be corrected. In addition, the risk assessment must be reviewed at regular intervals, if any of the circumstances change, or if you have any reason to believe that it is no longer valid [e.g. an accident, incident or near miss].

Appendix 1 Checklists for lone working

Points for Managers

- Make informal inspections to make sure the workplace is safe and the lone worker is working safely
- Ask yourself if you would feel safe in that situation
- Check that all equipment is properly maintained and appropriate records are kept
- Make sure all relevant risk assessments and safe working procedures are produced and readily at hand
- If hazardous substances are in use, make sure the relevant Material Safety Data Sheets are easily available in the laboratory
- Make sure that the lone workers are fully aware of all of the local rules, including the out-of-hours procedures
- Check the signing in book for out of hours to make sure that the workers are signing in and out and are only those authorised by the Head of Department
- Make sure that you have a reliable system for contacting the lone worker and checking that he or she are safe. If this involves a radio or mobile phone, then a prior check on reception in the area of work is essential. In areas of poor mobile phone reception, a satellite phone may be required instead.
- Consider what emergency situations could arise and ensure that you have the procedures in place to cater for them.
- Talk informally with the lone workers to find out whether they have any safety concerns about working alone and to reassure them, that you do not want them to be put at any greater risk through working alone

Points for Staff

Out-of-Hours

- Make sure someone knows when you arrive at work, where you will be and when you leave
- Don't do anything which you feel may put you in danger. If you are at all unsure what to do, or feel that the work requires more than one person to be done safely, leave it until there is someone else around
- Report any dangerous incident, including 'near misses', to your superior
- Make sure you know and follow the relevant risk assessments, safe working procedures and guidelines for the work, including those relating specifically to the lone working situation
- Make sure you know the appropriate accident and emergency procedures
- If you are injured or become ill, stay calm, remember your training and contact Security for assistance

Fieldwork

[Refer also to the CVCP Code of Practice for Safety in Fieldwork]

- Make sure that you have all of the necessary safety-related equipment with you and that it is appropriate for the conditions. This includes your personal clothing, survival aids and a means of contact, such as radio or mobile phone. In the case of mobile phones and radios, then check the batteries beforehand and preferably either carry a spare charged battery or have a means of recharging it, if necessary (e.g. in car charger)
- Check your route beforehand and make sure you know where you are going
- Check any equipment you will be using to ensure that it is in safe working order
- Make sure someone knows when you leave for the fieldwork site, where you will be, when you leave for home and when you arrive
- Check the site on arrival to make sure that it is safe to work there. You should do this, even if you have been there before, since there may be changes [e.g. weather, river levels, tidal conditions, phone reception] which alter the level of risk
- Check reception for your mobile phone or radio before commencement of work and regularly during it. If there is no reception, do not continue to work alone
- Don't do anything which you feel may put you in danger, especially because you are on your own. If you are at all unsure what to do, or feel that the work requires more than one person to be done safely, leave it until there is someone else around. Tell your supervisor about the problem
- Report any dangerous incident, including 'near misses', to your superior
- Make sure you know and follow the relevant risk assessments, safe working procedures and guidelines for the work, including those relating specifically to the lone working situation
- Make sure you know the appropriate accident and emergency procedures
- If you are injured or become ill, stay calm, remember your training and use the communication system provided [e.g. mobile phone or radio] to call for assistance

Visit to a home

Together with the supervisor / line manager, the lone worker must:-

- Undertake a risk assessment of the work activity to be carried out.
- Make contact with subject to arrange suitable visit time and to explain the purpose and content of the visit and answer any initial queries they may have. Make clear beforehand:

If any equipment is to be left in the home
If the interview is going to ask searching questions

- Decide on means of transport to the home and ensure that they have adequate information on safe routes and if using public transport have information on timetables etc. Be aware of any social tensions in the area to be visited.
- Ensure that they have means of communicating with their supervisor / line manager e.g. mobile phone, being aware of black spots.
- Have a clear itinerary of the visit including appointment times and the names, addresses and contact numbers of the subjects to be visited and that arrangements are in place for communicating with the supervisor / line manager. This must include an agreed procedure for making contact following the procedure to ensure the supervisor / line manager knows the lone worker is safe.
- Be familiar with procedures for what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure that they have an identification badge to show to the subject.
- At the home, try to sit close to a door allowing rapid exit, should this become necessary.
- Leave the house if at any point they feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- Arrange a debriefing session with the supervisor following the visit if appropriate to discuss if the control measures in place were adequate.

Transport

Car

Make sure the car you are driving has been regularly serviced, check tyres, oil, petrol

Make sure you have access to a national breakdown service

Plan your route in advance

Tell people your destination and expected time of arrival

Carry change and a phone card and mobile if you have access to one.

Keep possessions out of site

Keep doors locked and windows closed wherever possible.

Do not pick up hitchhikers

Keep a map handy incase you have to stop for directions

Always lock the car and keep everything in the boot

If returning to car after dark ensure parked in a well lit area

Have your key ready on returning to the car

Taxis

Avoid all unlicensed taxi cabs. In case a licensed cab is unavailable carry the number of a reputable company. Where possible book taxis in advance, do not get into a cab that you haven't asked for.

Train

Wait on the platform where it is well lit and there are plenty of people
Stand well back from the platform edge
Avoid compartments
Try to sit with other people
If you feel uneasy don't be afraid to get off at next stop
If you feel threatened or there is an incident act immediately, alert guard or driver, pull emergency alarm

Appendix 2 Examples of Lone-working situations

[1] Sampling from watercourses

A student is doing a project between October and March which requires her to go to a local wildlife conservancy park. The park is near the coast several miles away from the University and is relatively isolated, though with a main road between the nearest towns running close by. It is large, with both woodland and grassland and includes small and large areas of water, in the form of shallow ponds and deep lakes up to a mile long, shallow streams and a small river. The ponds and streams are less than 30 cm deep with low, firm banks. The lakes have been formed by quarrying and so are more than 30 metres deep, with sharply shelving edges. The river is several metres deep and is tidal, with muddy banks at low tide. It has a strong current and leads directly out to sea. There is a warden, but his hut will often be out of sight and out of earshot, being one mile away from the furthest sampling point, and his patrols are infrequent and irregular. She will be sampling animals from the ponds lakes, streams and river, using a large net to catch the animals and two buckets to hold the samples. Those from the lake and river require her to use a boat which has an outboard motor. The regime involves sampling from the ponds and streams twice a week and from the river and lakes once a month. She will go there during weekdays, when there are few regular visitors. However, there have been instances of vandalism, theft and one mugging, apparently carried out by men from one of the local towns..

The main hazards relevant to the lone working situation are as follows:

Transport to and from the park using her own car, which is several years old
Falling into the water while sampling, either from the bank or from the boat.
Adverse weather conditions, particularly since the sampling takes place during winter months on a very exposed site.
Equipment, particularly the boat and outboard motor.
Violence from other people who may have come into the park

Sudden illness causing incapacitation

Risk Assessment for the hazards

Transport presents a medium risk, particularly due to breakdown as it is an older car

Falling into the water must be considered a high risk for the river and lakes, both are deep, the lakes are large and the river has a strong current. The risk is significantly lower for the ponds and streams

Adverse weather conditions could result in an increased risk of slipping (e.g. on ice) and injury or falling into the water. There is also the risk of hypothermia, especially if she falls into the cold water. Ice and snow could also increase the risk of a car accident, especially on the untreated small roads in the park. This is at least a medium risk

Equipment poses a manual handling hazard in that the net is unwieldy and heavy for one person, as are the buckets. The boat and outboard motor are also more hazardous for one person to use. Again, this is a medium risk

Violence could occur if anyone came into the park with criminal intent and saw that the student was a young woman working alone. Although the likelihood of this type of attack appears to be low, the severity of the outcome could be great, so the risk is at least medium.

Sudden Illness If the student is some way from her car or the warden and is taken suddenly ill, she may not be able to get help. This might be particularly serious on or near the watercourses. However, the student is young, in good general health and has no known conditions which might predispose her to this problem. The risk from this is probably low.

Control Measures

The control measures to be adopted must adequately address the additional risks which have been identified and reduce the risks to a level no greater than they would be if two or more people were involved. Sampling from the shallow ponds and streams may be assessed as being of a level of risk which can be adequately controlled for the lone worker, through use of appropriate clothing. Substituting smaller nets and sample containers would also be useful in reducing manual handling risks. Sampling from the river and lakes is of a significantly higher level of risk, due to depth of water, currents and the need to use a boat and should be prohibited for someone working alone. This sampling could be done by providing for assistance from the warden, supervisor, or other suitable person, or it may be necessary to redesign the project so that it becomes unnecessary. Provision of a mobile phone [checking for reception] or two-way radio in contact with the warden is also essential. The question of transport is more difficult. Ideally, a hire-car would be provided, or checks should be made on the MOT and service history of the students own car. Driving on the narrow and potentially icy tracks between the watercourse should be prohibited.

[2] Working out-of-hours in a Biomedical Research Laboratory

Postgraduate staff and students are carrying out biomedical research in a laboratory in the basement of a large building. For reasons of security, this does not have free access, with both lift keys and knowledge of the security code for the locks required. The experiments involved sometimes necessitates working at night and at weekends. Frequently, only one person will be working during such times. Security do not man this building out of hours.

The main hazards relevant to the lone working situation are as follows:

Hazardous substances ranging from harmful to toxic, some are hazardous by ingestion only, others by inhalation and absorption. Corrosive substances are also used.

Sharp equipment, including scalpels, syringes needles and microtomes with sharp blades

Compressed gases, non-flammable.

Sudden illness which may incapacitate the worker

Latex gloves which may cause allergic reactions

Risk Assessment for the hazards

Hazardous substances pose varying levels of risk. The harmful substances are unlikely to have a rapid effect and to incapacitate the person, so the risk is relatively low. The corrosive substances are potentially more severe, but they are used in very small quantities, posing a low additional risk for the lone worker. The toxic substances, particularly those which are harmful by inhalation include several chemicals, which at full strength could have rapid effects and incapacitate within a very short time.

Sharp equipment could cause lacerations or needlestick injuries. The lacerations could be severe enough to require rapid first aid assistance, posing a medium risk. The needles pose a low risk in terms of physical injury, but the contents of some of the syringes may be toxic, where the risk becomes medium for the lone worker.

Compressed gases mainly pose a manual handling hazard for the lone worker when cylinders need to be replaced. This is a medium risk

Sudden Illness which resulted in the worker being incapacitated and unable to seek help is an additional risk for the lone worker. In general, the risk is low, but a worker with a medical condition which predisposed him or her to such a problem could well be at medium or even high risk.

Latex Gloves are a well-established cause of allergy. In general, the onset of this is slow and the effects may well be mainly dermatological, so there is no real extra risk from lone working. However, some people already sensitised to latex can suffer a sever reaction and go into anaphylactic shock, resulting in rapid incapacitation and even death.

Control Measures

The control measures to be adopted must adequately address the additional risks which have been identified and reduce the risks to a level no greater than they would be if two or more people were involved. These may include worker-activated alarm systems and prohibitions on using certain chemicals at

full strength, with working solutions only allowed. Manual handling problems with the gas cylinders could be reduced by providing smaller cylinders. Certain individuals may not be suitable for this work due to existing medical conditions, including latex allergy and may have to be excluded. In the case of latex gloves, elimination of their use and substitution with a safer alternative would be a better option, if practicable.

[3] Home Visit

A student is doing a project, which requires her to visit members of the public in their own home and set up monitoring equipment. The project also involves the collection of urine specimens from the subjects. The homes to be visited are spread out in a city and the student is unfamiliar with the area. Although initial contact has been made with the subjects to explain the nature of the project and arrange a suitable visit time, the student has no other information relating to the subject. She will go there where possible during the day, although it is not uncommon to make evening visits as the subjects may work during the day. The student does not have her own car and therefore has to rely on public transport.

The main hazards relevant to the lone working situation are as follows:

Transport to and from the home using public transport

Equipment, electrical hazards from the equipment being placed in the home, glass specimen bottles.

Violence from the volunteer or others within the household

Biological handling of urine samples

Animals, particularly dogs

Risk Assessment for the hazards

Transport presents a medium risk, although this will increase if public transport is used during the evening when the services will be less frequent.

Equipment poses a manual-handling hazard in that the monitoring equipment is unwieldy and heavy for one person. There may also be an electrical risk from the monitoring equipment; this is a medium risk. The specimen containers are made of glass, therefore care must be taken to avoid any breakages.

Biological There is a small risk of the student coming into contact with a biological fluid which is infected

Violence could occur from the visit to the household, as there is no available information on mental illness of the volunteer or any other persons within the house. There may also be an increased risk of violence when using public transport or generally being out after dark. This is of medium risk

Animals If the household contains animals there maybe an increased risk of attack particularly from dogs

Control Measures

The control measures to be adopted must adequately address the additional risks, which have been identified and reduce the risks to a level no greater than they would be if two or more people were involved. Provision of a mobile phone [checking for reception] or an alternative means of communication must be provided. The student must have access to an A to Z of the area prior to setting out and have compared this with the public transport routes ensuring that she has a well planned route. She must also be aware of the timetables, especially if she will be out after dark and potentially when there are less frequent services. The student must be provided with a suitable

specimen carrier, to ensure both the specimen is kept safe and minimise any risk of breakage. A suitable container must also be provided for the monitoring equipment. The student must be briefed regarding the institutions policy on the transport of specimens and have addressed all suitable precautions in the Risk Assessment. The student should be briefed regarding the added risk of encountering violence when visiting members of the public on her own. Ideally she should have undertaken basic training in general awareness and be aware of the institution's policy on lone working. During the initial contact, she should identify whether there are any pets within the household and whether they could be kept in a separate room during the visit. She must also be fully aware of what to do in the event of an emergency and the correct procedure for reporting all incidents, accidents and near misses whilst working alone.

Appendix 3 Some commercially available communication systems appropriate to lone workers.

1. Voice Connect

VC Lone Worker is based on the VCLL call processing system. By utilising a number of time delay features, the system allows workers to prerecord a distress message ready to be automatically delivered at a reset time should a problem arise. This message can be set up by the worker from any telephone, but for security reasons, each worker has their own PIN number so that they are the only person capable of setting up or canceling their own message.

At the start of the day the worker records the message and sets a delivery time

When the task is completed, the worker calls into the lone worker system identifies themselves keys in the password and cancels the message.

The time delivery is then stopped and the warning message is not delivered.

There is also an emergency distress signal feature incorporated into the system. If the worker gets into trouble before their message is due for release, and they have access to a telephone, they can call into the system and by dialing in any PIN number other than their own, the system will activate. If the worker has a mobile phone, then the distress number can be programmed directly into the phone.

Voice Connect Ltd
Fir tree Lane Trading Estate
Groby
Leicester LE6 0FH

0116 232 2622

www.voiceconnect.co.uk

2. Guardian

Guardian is a software based service for mobile phone users, which has been designed to help reduce anxiety and risk by enabling mobile staff to keep in close contact with their base. Lone workers are able to log on to the system and enter the details and expected duration of a visit into their mobile phone. If they fail to log off when the visit ends, the system activates a safety response. The response follows a client defined set of rules. Guardian can be tailored to the specific needs of any organisation.

Blue Chip technologies
Unit 4, 9 Heron Avenue
Belfast
44 028 9046 6460

www.bluechiptechnologies.com

Appendix 4 Useful Information Sources

- Working Alone in Safety [INDG73 (rev)]. Health and Safety Executive 2002
- Violence at Work [INDG69 (rev)]. Health and Safety Executive 2002
- A code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers. [<http://www.the-sra.org.uk/safe.htm> 2003]
- Working Alone. <http://www.unison.org.uk> 2000

Appendix 5 Training Courses

1 Suzy Lamplugh Trust

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust is a registered charity and can provide advice and training on dealing with violence at work. The Trust has a national network of around 300 experienced tutors. In addition to providing training the Trust has also produced various resource materials including videos, leaflets and posters.

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust
Trust Office
14 East Sheen Avenue
London SW14 8AS

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2 React

React Training tailor courses to meet the needs of the individual organization. The carry out a range of training from level one, basic awareness through to level three breakaway training.

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