

## Lone Working

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.



University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
West Highland College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd  
agus nan Eilean  
Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an Iar

## Lone Working Policy and Procedure

ELT manager	Assistant Principal Quality, Learning and Teaching
Responsible officer	Health & Safety Officer
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First Review Date	October 2015
Date review approved by BoM	
Next review date	Under Review The Board agrees that this policy will come to the Board meeting in December 2017
Equality impact assessment	
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact	BoM

# Index

<b>Item</b>	<b>Page No</b>
Section A – Policy	3
1. Policy Statement	3
2. Scope	3
3. Policy Outcomes	3
4. Check which policy to use	3
5. Key Definitions	3
6. What the law says	4
7. Objectives	4
8. Risk Assessment	5
9. Safe Systems of Work	5
10. Organisational responsibilities – Executive Leadership Team	5
11. Organisational responsibilities – other managers – Leadership Forum	6
12. Organisational responsibilities – employees and other staff	6
13. Related documents	7
14. Review period	7

## **Section A - Policy**

### **1. Policy Statement**

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 practicable.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all West Highland College UHI employees, casual workers and contractors undertaking work on behalf of the College.

### **3. Policy Outcomes**

The aim of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, to:

- ensure that staff who work alone are not exposed to undue risks to their health and safety
- ensure compliance with legislative requirements
- outline the steps to reduce and improve personal safety for staff who work alone
- highlight potential risks so that appropriate control measures can be put in place
- raise awareness of safety issues relating to lone working

### **4. Check which policy to use**

Risks relating to home workers, occasional or permanent, are managed via the Flexible Working Policy. Training in support of this policy is dealt with in the Staff Learning & Development Policy.

### **5. Key Definitions**

Lone Worker - A lone worker is anyone who works in isolation from their colleagues without close or direct supervision. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- staff working alone in premises such as Centre or Support staff
- staff working at remote College Centres
- staff working outside of normal working hours for instance in the library, at customer services desks, maintenance staff etc.
- staff travelling on remote roads for College business reasons
- staff travelling in areas for College business reasons with little or no phone coverage
- staff working at home for agreed College business reasons

Predictive Risk Assessment – A risk assessment is a careful examination of what, within a work environment, could cause harm to people, so that potential hazards can be identified and controls put in place to minimise risk. A risk assessment form can be used to collate all the relevant information and record any significant risks.

Dynamic Risk Assessment - This term is often used to describe the day-to-day judgments employees have to make at work in respect of any unpredictable event that may occur. They are not normally recorded at the time because they are about making specific judgments in certain situations although they may be recorded later.

## **6. What the law says**

West Highland College UHI has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Section 2(1), to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the Health, Safety and Welfare at work of all their employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999 places a duty on employers, to identify foreseeable significant risks within the organisation and implement suitable control measures 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 (Section 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 HASAW Act requires all 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 suitable form of risk assessment to ensure the safety of themselves and any of other persons they may be working with.

Working outside normal hours - where a person is required or requests to work after 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. Significant risks must be recorded on the risk assessment documents provided by West Highland College UHI.

Emergency contact and private contact information must always be handled in line with the guidelines set out by the Data Protection Act.

## **7. Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to ensure:

1. Lone workers are identified.
2. That risks inherent in lone worker situations are assessed and suitable precautionary measures taken
3. There is a local safe system of work which:
  - records the whereabouts of loneworkers
  - follows an agreed system for locating staff who deviate from their expected movement pattern where/if appropriate
  - identifies when lone working is no longer appropriate

## **8. Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment is the overall process of performing a systematic written risk analysis and evaluation in order to identify the measures required to control likelihood and consequences of risk.

Whilst this list is not exhaustive, typical risks faced by College staff may include:

- Violence and aggression
- Isolated areas/ difficult terrain
- Sudden illness
- Building condition
- Substances hazardous to health
- Animals
- Vehicle breakdowns
- Weather hazards
- Attempting tasks which cannot be safely undertaken by one person

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

## **9. Safe Systems of Work**

A safe system of work (SSOW) is a formal step-by-step written method of doing a particular job in a safe way. A safe system of work takes account of foreseeable hazards to health & safety and seeks to eliminate or minimise these. Safe systems of work are normally formal and documented systems such as written operating procedures, but in some cases they may be in the form of a dynamic risk assessment which is used to describe a process employees are expected to follow when an unplanned event occurs. However, to make such judgments, employees must have the necessary knowledge and experience. These systems 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 will be designed to reduce the need for lone working where possible but where this is not possible, a SSOW template will be available (still to do). 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.

## **10. Organisational responsibilities - Executive Leadership Team (ELT):**

Members of the ELT are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the management of Lone Working within the organisation is adhered to under the Health and Safety Policy.
- Ensuring that training is in place to support this policy
- Providing sufficient resources or by ensuring that a SSOW is in place at each location or for other occasions when lone working occurs.
- Monitoring and updating this policy as appropriate.

## **11. Organisational responsibilities – Managers**

Managers are responsible for:

- Identifying all their staff likely to work regularly in isolation from their colleagues.
- Assessing the foreseeable risks that such lone working presents.
- Having assessed the risks, for deciding whether lone working is reasonable or not in these situations.
- Reporting to their 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.
- Ensuring all their staff that work alone are made aware of this policy at their induction and reminded periodically as appropriate.
- Ensuring that they hold a valid contact number for ELT members or HR, which can be contacted out of hours.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly or when there is a significant change in circumstances.

## **12. Organisational responsibilities – employees and other staff**

All staff are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions or omissions,
- Identifying and reporting any activity carried out by them which will involve them working alone for more than one hour.
- Complying with any precautionary measures including guidelines laid down by managers such as a “buddysystem”.
- Providing 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
  - ❖ Daily out of base work place
  - ❖ Detail of the make, model, colour and registration number of the vehicle being used.
  - ❖ 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.
- Reporting to their managers any unsafe or potentially unsafe situations (near miss), and to report incidents in which violence or aggression or threats using the internal incident reporting procedure.
- Taking reasonable care for their own safety and that of others and not to expose them to unnecessary risk.
- Attending any relevant training provided.
- Ensuring their emergency contact details are up to date on CASCADE and

- include both mobile and land line numbers.
- Being fully aware of this Policy and associated procedures.
- Assisting their Manager in undertaking risk assessment

### **13. Related documents**

To help with the application of this policy you may find it useful to read the following:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Emergency Procedures
- Adverse Weather Procedure
- Flexible Working Procedure
- Fire & Evacuation Procedure
- Accident & Incident Reporting Procedure
- Accident & Incident Investigation Procedure
- First Aid Policy
- Staff Learning & Development Strategy, Policy & Procedure Framework

### **14. Review Period**

This policy will initially be reviewed annually.