

# LONE WORKING POLICY

## Statement and Purpose of Policy

1. The Veterans Association (the **Employer, we, our** or **us**) is committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of all employees, volunteers and consultants (the **Employees** or **they** or **their**) taken on by the Employer who are, always or sometimes, lone workers.
2. This Policy sets out the Employer's and the Employees' responsibilities in connection with health and safety, supervision and reporting, wellbeing, equipment and materials, expenses, security, and insurance related to lone working.
3. The Employer recognises that caring for employees who are lone workers presents a unique set of circumstances which will be taken into account.
4. The Employer may amend this Policy at any time, at our absolute discretion.

## Definition of a Lone Worker

5. A 'lone worker' is somebody who, at some time, works by themselves without close or direct supervision; they are physically isolated from their colleagues.
6. Workers who may be classified as lone workers include (but are not limited to):
  - a. People who work from home.
  - b. People who make calls alone to clients' homes or clients' commercial premises to work (e.g. electricians).
  - c. People who drive alone while working (e.g. delivery drivers).
  - d. People who work separately from others within a larger premises, including the Employer's premises. For example, people who work during non-typical hours (e.g. cleaners, night receptionists, or security staff).
  - e. People who operate a premises alone (e.g. petrol station attendants).
  - f. People who work alone in other remote locations.
7. For the purposes of this Policy, 'lone worker' may include any employee, volunteer, temporary worker, contractor/consultant, freelancer, or self-employed individual working or volunteering for the Employer.

## The Employees' Responsibilities

8. Employees should fulfil the following responsibilities whenever possible when working as lone workers.
9. Employees must:
  - a. Care for their own health and safety and for that of others (e.g. customers, clients or members of the general public) who could be harmed by their actions whilst working;
  - b. Cooperate with the Employer in the Employer's attempts to meet their legal obligations related to lone working. This includes, but is not limited to following any:
    - i. Health and safety guidance, policies and procedures issued by the Employer (including those which are related to lone working as well as general health and safety guidance, policies and procedures) or by anybody in control of other premises that the lone worker may work from.
    - ii. Safety systems and procedures issued by the Employer or by anybody in control of other premises that the lone worker may work from;
  - c. Familiarise themselves with all exits and alarms that may be used if an incident (e.g. a fire) occurs, for any premises they work at;
  - d. Employees must fulfil their responsibilities related to identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents (see the section entitled 'Health and safety incidents'), and follow the Employer's procedures that are in place for fires or other emergency situations;
  - e. Fulfil their responsibilities related to equipment and materials used whilst lone working (see the section entitled 'Equipment and materials');
  - f. Fulfil their responsibilities related to security used whilst lone working (see the section entitled 'Security'); and
  - g. Work with the Employer to complete risk assessments for situations in which they are lone working.
10. The Employees must also abide by their responsibilities related to general workplace health and safety.

11. Lone workers who work from home should also fulfil their responsibilities related to health and safety when working from home, which include:

- a. Liaising with their line manager to make sure that their workstation is appropriate and that they are working in a safe manner.
- b. Taking any necessary steps to achieve a comfortable posture while working from home on display screen equipment (DSE).
- c. While working with DSE, observing these guidelines wherever possible:
  - i. Break up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least five minutes every hour) or changes in activity.
  - ii. Avoid awkward, static postures by regularly changing their position.
  - iii. Get up and move around or do stretching exercises.
  - iv. Avoid eye fatigue by changing focus or by blinking from time to time.
- d. Notifying their line manager and the HR department if they identify any work-related health and safety concerns or hazards while working from home.
- e. For health and safety purposes, the Employer retains the right to inspect and check Employees' home offices. The need for such inspections will depend on Employees' specific circumstances, including the nature of their work.

## The Employer's Responsibilities

12. The Employer must fulfil our legal obligations and responsibilities to Employees who are lone workers. The Employer has a duty, following the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, to care for the health and safety of our employees while they are at work. The Employer recognises that we have a duty to assess the risks posed to lone workers in their individual lone working situations and to avoid, control, or minimise these risks wherever necessary.

13. The Employer's responsibilities include:

- a. The Employer must undertake risk assessments in accordance with the procedures and requirements outlined in this Policy.
- b. The Employer must maintain our premises as well as possible to ensure they are safe and, in particular, we must ensure that:
  - i. All emergency exits remain clear and clearly labelled.
  - ii. All alarm systems are maintained and checked regularly.
  - iii. All first aid equipment is present, adequate, well maintained, accessible and clearly labelled.
  - iv. All telephone and other communications equipment is present, adequate, well maintained and accessible.
- c. The Employer must control access to our premises, especially during times when workers are working alone (e.g. overnight).
- d. The Employer must fulfil our responsibilities related to identifying, responding to and reporting incidents (see the section entitled 'Health and safety incidents').
- e. The Employer must fulfil our responsibilities related to equipment and materials used whilst lone working (see the section entitled 'Equipment and materials').

14. The Employer's responsibilities will be met by a representative of the Employer who has day-to-day responsibility for health and safety matters (the **Health and Safety Officer**), with assistance where appropriate from line managers. Our Health and Safety Officer is \_\_\_\_\_. Overall responsibility for health and safety lies with.

15. The Employer must also abide by our responsibilities and obligations related to general workplace health and safety.

- a. The Employer is also responsible for the health and safety of any employees who are working from home, and as such, is responsible for carrying out risk assessments that are tailored to the individual circumstances of all employees working from home.

## Health and Safety Considerations

16. The Employer's duty to care for the health and safety of our employees while they are at work is a general duty which extends to all staff. When assessing and managing health and safety risks for lone workers, particular attention will be paid by the Employer to risks posed by lone workers' individual lone working situations. These may include, but are not limited to:

- a. The risk of lone workers being subject to violence, because the time, locations and nature of lone workers' work situations can increase the likelihood of individuals being exposed to situations where they may be violently attacked, often without other people being present to assist.
- b. The risk of lone workers being unable to easily access help in the instance of an emergency (including accidents or medical emergencies), e.g. if they are in a remote location.
- c. Risks associated with stress or mental wellbeing, which may be exacerbated by the isolated nature of lone working and by its inherent risks.

- d. Risks associated with tiredness and fatigue or poor and irregular eating habits that can be caused by, for example, working unusual hours and without colleagues to cover a worker's breaks.
- e. Threats from customers or members of the public.
- f. Trips or falls
- g. Fire

## **Risk Assessments**

17. A risk assessment is a systematic examination of the Employees' work activities which considers and evaluates the potential risks that the work poses to the health and safety of the Employees and others (including clients and members of the public). The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require all employers to conduct general risk assessments which should at least include consideration of risks affecting lone workers.

18. A risk assessment will be carried out by the Employer before any Employee works for us as a lone worker. The Employer will include the relevant Employee in the risk assessment process and will consider any input that they provide. Risk assessments will be carried out by employees' line managers on behalf of the Employer.

19. The risk assessment process will include:

- a. Assessment of risks posed to lone workers and others caused by the lone working situation, taking into account the factors described under the section entitled 'Health and safety considerations'.
- b. Recording of significant findings e.g. risks with a high probability of occurring or which risk the occurrence of a significantly harmful outcome.
- c. Analysis of whether the Employer is already doing enough to meet our health and safety obligations to those that the identified risks affect.
- d. Making recommendations and plans based on the outcomes of the above steps and implementing the recommended measures to reduce the risks to lone workers and others. This can include eliminating, mitigating, isolating or otherwise controlling the risks.

20. Risk assessments will be carried out on an ongoing basis, when appropriate. Employees may request that a new risk assessment is carried out and, when requests are reasonable, new risk assessments will be carried out. To request a risk assessment, Employees should contact employees' line managers.

## **Health and Safety Incidents**

21. Employees should report any health and safety incidents to the Health and Safety Officer as soon as possible after the incident occurs. 'Incident' includes near misses (e.g. narrowly avoided accidents). This includes, but is not limited to, incidents such as equipment malfunctions, illness or injury occurring whilst working, altercations with other people, or mental health difficulties experienced while or as a result of working.

22. If an Employee is unsure whether an incident should be reported, they should discuss this with the Health and Safety Officer and/or their line manager.

23. Employees should follow the usual reporting procedures for any work-related accidents that occur during lone working. Our reporting procedures are as follows:

- a. Fill in an incident report.
- b. Inform Line Manager where appropriate.
- c. If no obvious line manager inform John Langley.

24. If an Employee encounters an incident whilst lone working, they should take all reasonable measures to respond to the situation in a safe manner. This may include removing themselves from the situation by going to a safer place and requesting assistance. In the event of an emergency, lone workers should not hesitate to call the emergency services.

25. The Employer will assist in responding to any incidents however possible, for example, by giving advice on how to deal with the situation over the phone.

26. The Employer will ensure that lone workers who encounter incidents receive all support that they reasonably require after an incident, for example, necessary medical (including psychological) treatment and advice.

27. The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for investigating any injuries or work-related illnesses, for preparing and keeping accident records, and for submitting reports under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), where required. During this process, the Health and Safety Officer will ensure that risk assessments are updated where appropriate and that any changes are communicated to the relevant Employees.

## **Training**

28. Staff will be provided with any additional training necessary to enable them to work safely as a lone worker, in addition to the usual health and safety training that the Employer provides for all Employees. Where appropriate, this will include:

- a. Training on how to use equipment that will be used whilst lone working.
- b. First aid training, including training on how they can treat themselves if injured whilst working.
- c. Training on how to manage, control and respond to unusual or uncertain situations such as may be encountered by a lone worker.
- d. Safeguarding training for lone workers who may be working one-on-one with vulnerable people whilst lone working.

29. Lone workers may initially be accompanied whilst working by a supervisor, if this is necessary to train them on the procedures and health and safety considerations that they must know whilst lone working.

## **Supervision and Communication**

30. The Employer will ensure that adequate supervision is available for lone workers. The appropriate level of supervision will depend on the character of a lone worker's work and the risks associated with it. The lone worker's level of experience and training and their ability to deal with potential incidents will also influence the amount of supervision necessary. Adequate supervision will usually include a system for checking in regularly with lone workers and for knowing their location. Supervision and communication procedures will also include:

- a. Lone workers should check in every 2 hours where left for longer than 2 hours with an agreed person that day.
- b. John Langley must be made aware of who the agreed person is.
- c. The agreed person should contact John Langley if they have not heard from the lone worker within 2 hours.

31. Supervision will likely be predominantly remote for lone workers, conducted for instance via online platforms, mobile phone or radio contact. It is, therefore, vital that lone workers commit to being contactable via the appropriate method wherever possible. If an Employee is unsure what degree of contact is appropriate, they should contact the Health and Safety Officer and/or their line manager for advice.

32. Employees who are sometimes lone workers should make sure to inform their line managers of when and where they will be working as a lone worker.

33. Employees are responsible for maintaining any equipment in working order (e.g. by charging radios or phones), as well as possible, to ensure that they can remain in contact with their supervisor. If an Employee has any issues with communication equipment, they should make the Health and Safety Officer and/or their line manager aware of the issues as soon as possible.

34. If Employees have any concerns about their supervision and communication procedures, for example, if they would like to check in with a supervisor (e.g. their line manager or another manager, e.g. a shift manager) more often, they should raise these concerns as soon as possible with their line manager and/or the Health and Safety Officer, who will amend procedures appropriately.

## **Equipment and Materials**

35. The Employer will provide any equipment and materials required to protect lone workers' health and safety, such as first aid kits (when appropriate), as well as any other equipment Employees may reasonably require when lone working.

36. Any equipment or materials provided to Employees by the Employer for the purpose of facilitating lone working will remain the Employer's property.

37. In relation to the equipment or materials provided to them by the Employer, Employees must:

- a. Use it for work-related purposes only. Equipment and materials the Employer provides to Employees must not be used by any other member of the family or another third party at any time or for any purpose.
- b. Take reasonable care of it.
- c. Notify the appropriate department (e.g. the IT department) or their line manager of any faults with the equipment or materials.
- d. Make it available to the Employer for collection at any time if requested to do so.

38. Employees shall be responsible for any damage to any equipment or materials provided to them which goes beyond ordinary wear and tear, and which did not occur for reasons beyond their control.

## **Expenses**

39. If an Employee chooses to work as a lone worker (e.g. if they choose to work from home), the Employer will pay for or reimburse Employees for, when appropriate, any costs associated with Employees working as lone workers, for example, the costs

of heating, lighting, electricity, and broadband internet charges for their home, telephone calls, petrol and vehicle maintenance, or other transport costs.

40. If an Employee works as a lone worker by requirement (i.e. because the role they perform for the Employer requires them to be a lone worker), the Employer will meet all of the costs necessary to allow them to be a lone worker, and any costs necessary to ensure their health and safety while lone working, unless alternate provisions have been made in their individual employment contract, consultancy agreement, volunteer agreement or other agreement.

## Security

41. Employees are responsible for ensuring the security of all equipment, documents, and information, and must take all necessary steps to ensure that confidential information is kept secure at all times. In particular, Employees who work with computers and/or documents must:

- a. Password protect any confidential information held on their home computer.
- b. Lock their computer whenever it is left unattended.
- c. Store confidential papers securely when they are not in use.
- d. Ensure the secure disposal of any confidential papers (e.g. by using a shredder if one is available).
- e. Comply with data protection principles under the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- f. Report any data security breaches to their line manager immediately.

42. Employees should also:

- a. Take care to lock any vehicles used whilst working as a lone worker.
- b. Not leave any equipment unattended unless absolutely necessary, especially in public areas.
- c. Ensure any premises they work at alone are secure during their time there and when they leave.
- d. Ensure that their address and other personal details are not given to any clients (or others) unless necessary to perform their role.

## Insurance

43. Employees who are lone working will be covered by the Employer's insurance policies whilst lone working.

## Review and Further Information

44. This Lone Working Policy and the practices and procedures that it outlines will be regularly reviewed by the Employer, to ensure that all of the Employer's obligations under health and safety laws are met.

45. Employees should raise any concerns that they have about the practices and procedures that this Policy outlines with their line managers and/or the Health and Safety Officer. This includes requesting that new risk assessments be carried out or that further risk management steps be implemented.

46. Employees can obtain access to a copy of any of the other employment policies referred to within this Lone Working Policy by contacting the HR department and/or their line manager.

## Attribution

47. This Lone Working Policy was created using a document from [Rocket Lawyer](https://www.rocketlawyer.com/gb/en) (<https://www.rocketlawyer.com/gb/en>).