

Policy Title
Personal Safety and Lone Working

Policy Owner
Safety & Independent Assurance Director

Last Updated
December 2022

Owning Dept
Safety

Next Review Date
December 2024

Reason for Policy

To detail the arrangements and procedures necessary to ensure that those RNLI Volunteers and Employees whose working environment and conditions define them as 'Lone Workers'.

Employers have a responsibility for the safety, health and welfare of their Volunteers and Employees whilst at work, including lone working.

Objective of Policy

To establish that RNLI Volunteers and Employees get the correct level of advice, support and supervision to ensure they work in safe working conditions.

We are committed to ensuring that those who are a lone worker, their working environment and practices are such that they are put at no greater risk than any comparable individual employee working in a similar environment. Where necessary, extra risk control measures will be implemented to ensure this. This will be a pragmatic and balanced approach with any rules, precautions or additional control measures deemed necessary arising directly out of the risk assessment process.

Applicability

The RNLI has a large number of Volunteers and Employees who fall within the definition of a lone worker. These include Volunteers and Employees working in lifeboat stations, offices, workshops, shops, attending meetings as a lone representative, international travel, driving for long distances alone etc.

For many Volunteers and Employees, lone working is part of their normal daily routine. However, a person who normally works under supervision or with other colleagues, but is unusually left alone, is equally considered to be a lone worker and will be treated accordingly by line managers.

Homeworking has its own RNLI policy and checklist (Working at home policy) that should be undertaken before a manager agrees to a member of Volunteers and Employees becoming a homeworker. Occasional homeworking is not considered within the scope of this policy.

Version: 2.0
Published: 01/12/22
Author: Kelly Scagell
Job Title: Safety Management System Compliance Manager

RNLI Classification: Protected

Disclaimer:

The content of this document is considered 'Protected' in line with the RNLI classifications. Print only when required, and appropriate protection must be applied if printed.

Policy

1. RESPONSIBILITY

1.1 Executive Team

To implement a Safety Management System for the control of SHE risks across the RNLI to continually improve the organisation's safety performance.

To provide financial resources and include in the annual budget adequate provision for any necessary expenditure on premises, equipment and training.

To provide core training to all Volunteers and Employees applicable to their role.

Ensure that a programme of risk assessments is carried out, hazards identified, and risk mitigation measures put into place and monitored.

1.2 Management Responsibility

The primary safety measure associated with all lone working is the risk assessment process. It is the responsibility of all line managers to carry out the appropriate level of risk assessment for any situation where lone workers are involved and through this determine the control measures necessary to minimise the hazards and risks.

1.3 Individual Responsibility

It is the manager's responsibility to assess hazards to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary. However, the individual also has responsibilities:

- a) Individuals have a legal responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their actions.
- b) Once a risk assessment has been carried out, any measures or instructions detailed in it must be complied with.
- c) Individuals must not take unnecessary risks or shortcuts that increase the hazards involved in the work they are undertaking.
- d) In any situation where, due to the potential hazards, a person is unsure whether they should start or carry on with the task in hand, they are to STOP and seek advice and guidance from their line manager.
- e) If an individual feels that circumstances or working practices have changed and it is felt that the existing risk assessment requires reviewing as a result, then this must be brought to the attention of their line manager immediately.
- f) If an incident or near miss occurs, then details e.g. about a violent individual, must be reported.
- g) To attend training provided by the RNLI.

2. PROCEDURE

2.1 General

Working alone is specifically prohibited by law in certain dangerous situations, such as working on live electrical equipment and entry into confined spaces, but the vast majority of lone working situations will be managed by the application of the risk assessment process.

Version: 2.0

Published: 01/12/22

Author: Kelly Scagell

Job Title: Safety Management System Compliance Manager

RNLI Classification: Protected

Disclaimer:

The content of this document is considered 'Protected' in line with the RNLI classifications. Print only when required, and appropriate protection must be applied if printed.

The level of supervision and communication required to manage lone working is a management decision and should be based on the outcome of a risk assessment. We will put into place procedures to monitor lone workers to ensure they remain safe.

The maximum time that should be considered a lone working period shall be decided on a risk-based approach, taking into consideration the people involved, the equipment being used and the environment the activity is being undertaken in.

All Volunteers and Employees have the right to refuse to work in lone working situations if they consider that it may cause them harm.

2.2 Risk Assessment

We undertake risk assessments, but special attention is needed when assessing lone working through the risk management process. The risks inherent in such works are exacerbated by the lack of the normal lines of support such as managerial supervision and so demand closer scrutiny.

The risk assessment should identify foreseeable events, and safe working procedures should be established as part of the control process with Volunteers and Employees involved in the development and ultimate engagement with them.

All risk assessments should be reviewed at regular intervals, at least once a year, or whenever there is any reason to believe that the existing assessment is no longer valid or a significant change occurs.

Changes may be to procedures, new team members, illness or change in physical capabilities of existing team members, or after a particular incident.

Managers should ensure that records are made of every review carried out and the new versions disseminated to Volunteers and Employees.

Hazards fall under the three categories known as PET's:

- The PERSON you are dealing with
- The ENVIRONMENT you are working in
- The TASK you are doing

Examples are given below under each category:

Person

- Is there a risk of violence?
- Visiting people in their own homes
- Enforcing a rule people might disagree with
- Does the person working alone have a health issue?
- Issue of stress from working on their own
- If the lone worker's first language is not English, are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communications, especially in an emergency?

Version: 2.0

Published: 01/12/22

Author: Kelly Scagell

Job Title: Safety Management System Compliance Manager

RNLI Classification: Protected

Disclaimer:

The content of this document is considered 'Protected' in line with the RNLI classifications. Print only when required, and appropriate protection must be applied if printed.

Environment

- Volunteers and Employees leaving their workplace by way of dark corridors or stairways
- Those remote from the central office including abroad
- Fire in the property
- Working over or near water
- Slips, trips or falls

Task

- If working outside of normal hours
- Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?
- Repairing machinery because of the possibility of contact with dangerous parts
- Those who travel as part of their job
- Working at height
- Driving long distances with lack of regular breaks
- Carry money during fundraising activities

This list is not exhaustive and in the context of the RNLI, the factors affecting lone working need to be specifically evaluated in each individual case. To ensure this, we will involve Volunteers and Employees when considering potential risks and the measures to control them.

Obviously, the degree to which any one or more of these factors affects any lone worker depends on the working environment and the role that person undertakes.

2.3 Controls

We will ensure that we have put in controls to reduce the risk from harm occurring from the hazards identified within the risk assessment. The control measure will look at ways to eliminate, isolate, and reduce the risk.

However, whilst the type and degree of control measure will vary, a method of regular communication should always be agreed to help ensure the safety of the lone worker and prevent long periods without external contact. This will also reduce the chance of an injured person remaining untreated for a protracted period.

The level of supervision needed is a management decision, which should be based on the findings of a risk assessment, i.e. the higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they need assistance.

Line managers should also ensure that risk control measures are implemented fully, Volunteers and Employees are properly trained and adequately supervised e.g. by regular contact via phone with the supervisor/line manager to minimise identified risks.

All managers should look to eliminate the need for Volunteers and Employees to work on their own and only after this has been considered should additional controls be implemented.

Version: 2.0

Published: 01/12/22

Author: Kelly Scagell

Job Title: Safety Management System Compliance Manager

RNLI Classification: Protected

Disclaimer:

The content of this document is considered 'Protected' in line with the RNLI classifications. Print only when required, and appropriate protection must be applied if printed.

These controls will fall into the categories of Systems, Training and Devices. The solution to the lone working issue is likely to be a combination of a number of controls rather than a specific control.

2.3.1 Systems

2.3.1.1 Support System

We will ensure systems are in place to ensure that should a lone working alarm device (see below under Devices) be activated (including false alarms), that an appropriate response will be initiated.

Line managers must ensure that they or another (nominated manager or organisation) is contactable when Volunteers and Employees are lone working.

Contingency plans specifying the escalation action to be taken (should a pre-arranged contact not be made, or an alarm device activated), should be included as part of the lone workers safe system of work.

The escalation process should include identification of contact points at appropriate stages, including a line manager, senior manager and, ultimately, the police. Any individual nominated as an escalation point should be fully aware of their role and its responsibilities.

2.3.1.2 Monitoring

We will ensure that a procedure is in place where we can ensure that a lone worker can indicate, where appropriate and subject to a risk assessment:

- What task they are undertaking
- That they are at risk
- That they have completed a task and are progressing to the next task
- Have returned to their base or home on completion of a task

2.3.1.3 Identification of known problem locations and people

We will use historical incident and near miss / hazard observation reports as well as local knowledge and information provided by third parties to create a list of known problem locations and people. This information will be used to inform the risk assessment process and Volunteers and Employees briefed as appropriate.

This information is confidential to us and will be stored and handled in conjunction with the RNLI's Data Protection Policy and Procedure.

2.3.1.4 Examples of potential support systems

Examples of potential support systems the line manager and lone worker can choose from are listed below. This is not an exhaustive list and line managers can adopt local systems of work as they see fit.

In and Out Wipe boards: This can be a manual or electronic system that keeps colleagues updated on person's whereabouts and requires the person to check out and sign in when returning e.g. office based individuals.

Buddy / call in: The buddy system is "an arrangement in which two individuals are paired" (for safety in a potential hazardous situation). Volunteers and Employees are expected to arrange to contact their buddy

Version: 2.0

Published: 01/12/22

Author: Kelly Scagell

Job Title: Safety Management System Compliance Manager

RNLI Classification: Protected

Disclaimer:

The content of this document is considered 'Protected' in line with the RNLI classifications. Print only when required, and appropriate protection must be applied if printed.

before engaging in a task deemed to be potentially dangerous, giving a finishing time, they are then to confirm the task is completed safely to the buddy upon finishing.

The nominated buddy will:

- be fully aware of the movements of the lone worker
- have all necessary contact details for the lone worker, including next of kin
- have details of the lone worker's known breaks or rest periods
- attempt to contact the lone worker if they do not contact the buddy as agreed
- follow the agreed local escalation procedures for alerting their line manager and/or the police if the lone worker cannot be contacted or if they fail to contact their buddy within agreed and reasonable timescales.

Working Process: The manager can, with the lone worker, review the tasks being undertaken and reduce the risk by making changes to the working process e.g. when having people taking money to the bank consider taking alternative routes at different times so that they are not following the same routine.

Employee Assistance Program: As part of our support program we operate an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) intended to help Employees and Operational Volunteers deal with problems (including personal) that might adversely impact their job performance, health, and well-being. Problems identified can include verbal abuse and physical assault whilst at work.

Should a non – operational Volunteer be verbally abused or suffers a physical assault whilst lone working or not, then we will offer them support appropriate to the situation

2.3.2 Training

We have to ask, can this person logistically, effectively and safely undertake the task we are asking of them on their own? Competence is something that is measured by experience, knowledge, training and by an individual's skill level. When people are alone, they can behave differently to how they might if they were accompanied. This includes the risks they take.

Therefore, a training needs analysis (TNA) should be undertaken by the line manager on identified lone working Volunteers and Employees and training tailored to the identified hazards.

Training topics should cover:

- Awareness of lone worker safety
- Importance of policies and procedures set out for personal safety
- Planning and preparation to reduce risk
- Understanding that some tasks are too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by an unaccompanied individual
- Practical risk avoidance strategies
- Communication skills including diffusion and de-escalation techniques
- Good practice
- Use of personal protective equipment e.g. safety devices
- On-going communications

Version: 2.0

Published: 01/12/22

Author: Kelly Scagell

Job Title: Safety Management System Compliance Manager

RNLI Classification: Protected

Disclaimer:

The content of this document is considered 'Protected' in line with the RNLI classifications. Print only when required, and appropriate protection must be applied if printed.

Task specific risk assessment training: The training required to be undertaken will be linked to task specific risk assessments which will identify the training and competency levels required.

Dynamic risk assessment training: A dynamic risk assessment can be defined as a continuous process of identifying hazards and the risk of them causing harm, and taking steps to eliminate or reduce them in the rapidly changing circumstances of an incident.

The dynamic risk assessment involves Volunteers and Employees:

- Being alert to warning signs as covered in conflict resolution training
- Carrying out a '10-second risk assessment'; if Volunteers and Employees feel there is a risk of harm to themselves, they should leave immediately
- Placing themselves in a position to make a good escape, i.e. where possible, being the closest to an exit
- Being aware of all entrances and exits
- Being aware of the positioning of items that could be used as a weapon
- Making a judgement as to the best possible course of action – for example, whether to continue working or withdraw
- Utilising appropriate physical security measures (e.g. using a lone worker device to raise an alarm)
- Ensuring that when they enter a confined area or room, they can operate the door lock in case they need to make an emergency exit
- Avoiding walking in front of a person, and not positioning themselves in a corner or in a situation where it may be difficult to escape
- Remaining calm and focused during an incident in order to make rational judgements
- Being aware of their body language (as well as that of the other person), as there is a risk of exacerbating the situation

Conflict resolution: We will arrange for Volunteers and Employees to be trained, based on a risk assessed approach, in the skills required to manage and resolve conflict, disagreements and differences in their working environment.

Breakaway techniques: We will arrange for Volunteers and Employees to be trained, based on a risk assessed approach, in breakaway techniques to allow them to quickly and effectively create a window of opportunity in which to escape from an attacker.

2.3.3 Devices

BS8484 – Lone worker electronic device standard: We shall give consideration to ensuring as part of our best practice process, that all our devices comply with BS8484 which is the British Standard for the provision of lone worker device services.

The standard defines both lone worker devices and Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) compliance as well as covering aspects such as sound financial grounding, secure data protection, quality training and full audit capability from the supplier of a lone worker solution.

Activation of a lone working alert should trigger a response from us, depending on the nature of the alert.

Version: 2.0

Published: 01/12/22

Author: Kelly Scagell

Job Title: Safety Management System Compliance Manager

RNLI Classification: Protected

Disclaimer:

The content of this document is considered 'Protected' in line with the RNLI classifications. Print only when required, and appropriate protection must be applied if printed.

Where a device is issued to Volunteers and Employees they will be trained to:

- a) understand the functions of the lone worker device
- b) be trained in its use
- c) keep the device charged, on their person and available for use
- d) understand the response strategy of the organisation

Office / shop based fixed alarms: Where a fixed alarm system is installed, it will be of a silence type that will send an alert that the person requires assistance when activated. We will ensure that the system will be serviced and maintained to the manufacturer's instructions.

Alert device: The purpose of the alert device is that a member of Volunteers and Employees would wear the device and use it to indicate their whereabouts, how long they intend to be at a certain location and use it to raise an alert if assistance is required. We have a number of devices which can be provided and the SHE Team should be consulted as to an appropriate choice.

Man-down device: The purpose of the man down device is to indicate if a person goes into a prone position and remains that way for a period of time. It could be used by a person with a medical condition or a person who might injure themselves and be unable to activate an alarm manually e.g. a person falling from a height.

Mobile phone applications: With the increasing use of app's, a tracking app linked to a GPS system may under certain circumstance provide a means by which a person can indicate their location or indicate that they require assistance. The issue of coverage of the network should be considered if this option is to be used.

Tracking device: The purpose of the tracking device is that it is fitted to a vehicle and that we can identify the vehicle's location. This will assist with locating a person's last known location if they have not returned by their designated time.

Personal audible alarms: Personal alarms are devices which can be used to deter a personal attack; these will either be gas or electrically powered and emit a piecing noise to deter attack and to raise an alarm.

Personal alarms are primarily to 'stun' an assailant for a few seconds, allowing the lone worker to make their escape; it cannot be assumed that people will give assistance as alarms are often ignored.

We will ensure that there is a system in place for personal alarms to be changed on a regular basis as their power sources have the potential to deteriorate over a period of time.

Digital radios: Where digital radios are utilised we will give consideration to purchasing those with lone worker system availability built in.

Version: 2.0

Published: 01/12/22

Author: Kelly Scagell

Job Title: Safety Management System Compliance Manager

RNLI Classification: Protected

Disclaimer:

The content of this document is considered 'Protected' in line with the RNLI classifications. Print only when required, and appropriate protection must be applied if printed.

3. MONITORING & REVIEW

Adherence to this policy will be monitored by a combination of local inspection, internal and third party audits.

Should an incident occur whilst a person is working alone, the incident should be recorded via the incident report system by the Volunteers and Employees involved or a line manager.

An investigation shall be undertaken to understand how the incident happened and the learning outcomes circulated to the rest of the organisation, as appropriate.

Significant findings of inspections, audits or investigations will be used to identify areas for improvement and opportunities for sharing good practice.

Definitions

Lone Worker: Any person who routinely works alone without direct or close supervision.

Systems: Covers procedures that we or outside contractors will put in place to implement a safe system of work regarding lone working.

Training: Covers training that we or outside contractors will put in place to reduce the risk from lone working.

Devices: Covers the use of devices that we or outside contractors will purchase or develop that can be used to reduce the risk from lone working.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Flowchart for managers

Reference Documents

Health and Safety guidance on the risks of lone working HSE INDG 73
BS8484 - Lone worker standard

Related Policies, Procedures & Guidance

RNLI Work at Home Policy

Version: 2.0

Published: 01/12/22

Author: Kelly Scagell

Job Title: Safety Management System Compliance Manager

RNLI Classification: Protected

Disclaimer:

The content of this document is considered 'Protected' in line with the RNLI classifications. Print only when required, and appropriate protection must be applied if printed.