

ASC Practitioner Generic Risk Assessment Guidelines For Lone Working And Transporting People

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines and sample generic risk assessments have been created to aid LCC managers and staff to consider the risks involved when lone working and transporting people whom they support. It suggests measures to assist reducing the risks to an acceptable level and can apply to permanent, temporary, agency staff and students.

The sample risk assessment templates prepared for fieldworker activities can be amended locally by managers/teams to best suit individual/team needs, site specific needs or task specific hazards.

GUIDELINE AIMS TO:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working and transporting people.
- Increase staff awareness of Health and Safety responsibilities at various levels.
- Ensure that the risks of lone working and transporting people are assessed in a systematic and on-going manner, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce those risks to the lowest practicable level.
- Ensure that appropriate training and information is available to staff, that equips them to recognise risks and provide practical advice on safety.
- Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all accidents/incidents.
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to people and staff.
- Ensure that LCC ASC complies with relevant Health and Safety legislation and best practice procedures.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Management Board and Executive have overall responsibility for considering proposed changes to the County Council's Health & Safety Policy, within which individual committees and their officers will operate. The Portfolio holder for Resources has responsibility, on behalf of the Executive, to approve those changes.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for:

- Ensuring that the Council's Health and Safety Policy is implemented effectively by Corporate Directors.

The Management Board shall:

- Provide strategic direction and endorse corporate health and safety strategies.
- Ensure that robust health and safety management systems, arrangements and organisations exist in each department.
- Support the Chief Executive in meeting his safety responsibilities for the Council as a whole.

Corporate Directors together with the Management Team are responsible for establishing their own organisation for:

- Producing a Health and Safety Policy for their Directorate that supports the Corporate Health and Safety objectives, bringing this to the attention of employees and revising as necessary to ensure that it remains valid.
- Identifying the hazards and relevant legislation applying to their activities and assessing the associated risks.
- Planning and implementing arrangements to eliminate or control significant risks and to comply with the relevant legislation.
- Monitoring the above arrangements to ensure that they are working effectively.
- Recording the significant findings of their risk assessments in an appropriate manner.
- Ensuring their managers are competent in health and safety management techniques, the minimum standard being as set out in the County Council's Competencies Framework.
- Ensure that staff are involved and consulted on relevant health and safety matters in good time and ensure that their views are considered.
- Obtaining assistance from the Health and Safety Team where necessary.
- Reviewing the health and safety performance of their Directorate annually and provide a summary of that review for the Corporate Risk & Safety Steering Group.
- Reporting to the Chief Executive any situation where the standards set out in the County Council's General Statement of Health and Safety Policy cannot be implemented.

Heads of Service, Managers and Supervisors

Heads of Service, Managers and Supervisors will have specific responsibilities which will be set out in their Directorate's Health and Safety Policy but in any case are required to:

- Comply with the requirements of their departments Health and Safety documentation.
- Ensure all work related hazards are identified and suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken.
- Develop local procedures and safe working practices in line with the departmental documentation and local risk assessments.
- Ensure that they and their staff have adequate levels of competency to complete their work tasks safely.
- Ensure that local health and safety systems are maintained.
- Report and investigate incidents as necessary.

All employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others affected by their acts or omissions.
- Co-operating with the management of their Directorate so far as is necessary to enable the risks to be controlled and achieve compliance with relevant legislation.
- Using all work equipment and in accordance with the instruction and training received.
- Not intentionally misusing anything provided in the interests of Health, Safety and welfare.
- Reporting to their supervisor or manager any Health and Safety risk which they cannot deal with themselves or any shortcoming they consider to be in the Health, Safety and welfare arrangements.

Health and Safety Practitioners

- In order to assist the Council the Corporate Health & Safety Adviser will provide competent advice and make recommendations to the Management Board on the development of the Health and Safety strategy, policies, procedures and implementation plans.

The Council also employs the services of the Health and Safety Team of Mouchel who:

- Provide competent advice and support to managers on Health and Safety matters.
- Keep up to date on developments in Health and Safety legislation and practice.
- Monitor on behalf of the Council the implementation of Health and Safety policies and procedures.
- Provide Health and Safety training and instruction.
- Receive accident and incident reports, investigate as appropriate, compile and analyse accident and incident data.
- Liaise with recognised trade unions and their appointed workplace representatives on issues relating to the health and safety of their members.

Risk Assessment Questions

Risk assessments should be carried out by competent persons, be recorded, evaluated at appropriate staff and managerial levels and communicated to all whom their contents may have a bearing upon during the performance of their work. Factors to consider when carrying out the risk assessment include the following:

- Does the activity need to be carried out alone?
- Does the activity need to be specially authorised before lone working/transporting a person can commence?
- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is the lone workers car suitable for transporting the person?
- Is there a record or history of violence, aggression, verbal and physical?
- Is there potential for abuse or racism at the location, either from the person, relatives or neighbours?
- Is there a potential risk of violence/aggression?
- Does the task being undertaken with the person have the potential to cause them to become angry?
- Is the area being visited a known trouble spot?
- Is there a safe way in/out for one person?
- Can the building be secured to prevent entry but still maintain sufficient emergency exits?
- Are there known drugs, alcohol or mental health issues, which need to be considered?
- Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person?
- Is the staff member medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- What training is needed to make sure the staff member is competent in safety matters?
- Have staff received the training which is necessary to allow them to work alone?
- How will the staff member be supervised?
- Are people of a particular gender especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are new or inexperienced staff especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are younger workers especially at risk if they work alone?
- What happens if a staff member becomes ill, has an accident, or if there is an emergency?
- Are there systems in place for contacting and tracing those who work alone?
- Will the visit/meeting be taking place out of hours?

Details of the risk assessment should be recorded on paper or a retrievable electronic database and should include:

- The extent and nature of the risks.
- Factors that contribute to the risk including job content and specific tasks and activities.
- The safe systems of work to be followed to eliminate or reduce the risk.
- The numbers of staff and others affected by the activity.
- Any changes, recommendations, training, policy and procedural reviews necessary.
- Who is responsible for ensuring the identified actions in the risk assessment are followed through to a logical conclusion.
- Environmental factors, lighting, temperature, noise floor conditions etc.

Information from the risk assessment should be passed to staff.

REPORTING AND RECORDING

All staff should familiarise themselves with the LCC's accident/incident reporting procedure.

Staff should report **all** accidents/incidents to their line manager at the earliest opportunity.

Staff should also report 'near misses', where they feel threatened, or 'unsafe', even if this was not a tangible event/experience. Managers may need to investigate the incident, implement preventative measures to ensure there is no recurrence of the incident and communicate lessons learned to other staff via an alert indication on AIS. A report on the incident will be provided to the Health & Safety Team without delay. Failure to report an incident may put others at risk. Failure to indicate an alert on AIS may put others at risk.

Any incidents or near misses should be reported on a P03 form. The completed form should then be emailed to the Health & Safety Team & may need reporting to HSE.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In addition to the above, all staff should ensure that they are aware of the contents of the [Health and Safety Manual](#).

Please see other useful links:

[Health & Safety Management - Advice & Guidance](#)

[Health & Safety Policy Leaflet](#)

[Reporting of Work Related Injuries/Incidents and Cases of Ill health](#)

[Fitness for Work Assessment](#)

[RIDDOR Incidents](#)

[Violence at Work](#)

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

Risk assessments should be reviewed and updated each year, or sooner should circumstances change or there is an incident by a manager or competent staff member.

The ASC Service Development Team along with colleagues from the Health & Safety Team will monitor and review these guidelines in partnership with staff.

GUIDANCE ON LONE WORKING

STAFF WORKING ALONE WITHIN A DEPARTMENT DURING OFFICE HOURS SHOULD CONSIDER:

- Ensuring that you are near a telephone to call for help if needed.
- Securing valuables in an appropriate place.
- Ensuring that keys are secured and not accessible to visitors.
- Calling a colleague or Emergency Services for help if you become anxious regarding their safety.
- Avoiding meeting people if you are alone in the workplace.
- If you are meeting someone, let other people know who you are meeting, when, where and telephoning them to let them know that Mr X has arrived and that you will get back to them at a certain time.
- Not telling anyone that you are alone in the workplace.
- Reporting any incidents to the relevant Manager as soon as practical after any events.
- Never assume it won't happen to you – plan to stay safe.

STAFF WORKING ALONE WITHIN A DEPARTMENT OUTSIDE OFFICE HOURS SHOULD CONSIDER:

- Letting your work base/colleagues know if you are staying behind in the office at the end of the normal working day. They will then know to check in on you before you leave.
- If you are working at weekends or very late at night/ early in the morning let a colleague/friend or relative know of your whereabouts and the time that you are expected back. Contact them at regular intervals to verify that you are OK.
- If you change your plans, let your contact know immediately.
- Ensuring that all windows and doors are secured to prevent unauthorised access, so that the working environment is as safe as possible.
- Not opening the doors to any strangers no matter what non LCC identification they have. If they are meant to be there, they will either have keys or another means of access.
- Never giving security codes or keys to any stranger. Again there are channels they can use to gather information if they are legitimate and are meant to have access;
- Making sure the fire escape routes are available and not locked (as may happen outside working hours).
- Not using lifts at these times, as you may become trapped inside and unable to gain assistance or attention.
- If the fire alarm activate whilst you are in the office alone, you must leave the building immediately by the nearest fire exit. Make your way to the front of the building, a safe distance away, call and wait for the emergency services to arrive.
- If you discover any problems with equipment whilst in the office, do not attempt to repair or tamper with the controls and report it to your manager the following working day.
- On leaving a Department, ensuring that all windows are closed and doors locked.
- Ensuring you have access to a phone in case you need to call the emergency services.
- Parking as close to the building in a well lit area. Moving your car closer to the building if necessary, to minimise the risks if leaving the building on your own.
- If an incident occurs, follow the accident incident reporting procedure.

- Liaising with the Commissionaire or a caretaker, who in turn should liaise with anyone else in the building about estimated exit times, your whereabouts during extended hours and when you plan to leave the building.
- Never assume it won't happen to you – plan to stay safe.

STAFF LONE WORKING OFF SITE SHOULD CONSIDER:

Keeping their electronic calendar updated with:

- The location of the visit/meeting.
- A contact telephone number, if possible.
- The time of the appointment.
- The likely or estimated length of the meeting/visit.
- The time when you are expected to return to the office/base or call in.
- If not returning to the office, the time and location of your next visit or the time when you are due to arrive home.
- If driving a vehicle having the make, registration and model on an accessible record.

Colleagues may be aware of issues that other staff are not, you should ascertain as much information as possible about the appointment, use the list below as a reference.

- Do you need support from another colleague during the visit?
- Is it necessary to carry specialist lone worker protection with you?
- Is your mobile phone fully charged and does it have satellite coverage and signal reception?
- Can you park your car (if using one) close to the visit address without putting yourselves at risk, say in a darkened road or cul-de-sac?
- Is it necessary to have an exit strategy in the event of an emergency arising?

VISITING PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN HOME/PREMISES

Prior to a home visit taking place the employee should consider: -

- Obtaining as much information about the person, their families, location to be visited as possible.
- Reviewing existing information regarding the person within case notes, previous referrals, alerts etc.
- Reviewing the last documented risk assessment, or if this is unavailable, contact the referrer to ascertain whether or not there are any relevant risk factors present and/or whether there is any reason why it would be unadvisable to visit the client alone.
- Double-checking the address and telephone number.
- In the event that no records or information is available, consider whether or not it would be more appropriate to invite the client into a workplace or a safe place, therefore avoiding the need to make a home visit.

If it is decided that a Home visit is required, the employee should consider:-

- Exploring whether the person is high risk/potential high risk.
- Whether it would be appropriate to arrange to have a 2nd staff member present for the duration of the visit.

- A 2nd staff member should be present if a particular safety risk has been identified or if this has been identified within a risk management plan.
- Always ensuring that fellow workers know where they are/ updating their electronic calendars. Details could include: details of expected time of return, names and addresses of the clients being visited and time of appointments when visiting alone, mode of contact (e.g. mobile phone numbers).
- Making sure that they carry appropriate personal identification e.g. name badge and identification card to verify their authenticity.
- Dressing appropriately for the area or person to be visited, particularly when the patient's culture demands that women are covered and do not wear expensive-looking jewellery items.
- Wearing shoes and clothes that do not hinder movement or ability to run in case of an emergency.
- Ensuring that the means of communication and any personal alarms are working and accessible. Programme the work base number/switchboard number into mobile telephones so they can be 'speed dialled'.

En route to the home visit consider:

- If the vehicle is well maintained and has sufficient fuel.
- Bags and equipment are concealed and cannot be seen when the vehicle is parked.
- Only carrying to individual appointments equipment that is needed.
- The time, the location and the route.
- Locking vehicle while driving and waiting.

Are you being followed? Do they you uneasy or uncertain?

- Remain with or return to your vehicle, drive away for a short while.
- Drive to a place of safety.
- If suspicions are confirmed, contact the Police and a manager.

On arrival

- Be alert, aware, safe.
- Park with care – as near to the address as possible, in a lit area away from subways and waste ground.
- Do not leave equipment/valuables in the car or on show.
- Assess the situation on approach and be prepared to abandon or postpone the visit if in there is a concern for safety.
- Have identity badges available on request.
- If the person answering the door makes the you feel uneasy about entering then an excuse should be made not to enter; for instance when the service user or other are drunk or 'intoxicated' by drugs.
- Follow the occupants in when entering and not take the lead.
- Remain alert while in the house look for anything that may present a risk.
- When taking a seat within the property, try to ensure you sit near an exit route.
- Be aware of any obstacles that may prevent you from exiting the premises quickly.

If in doubt

- Do not enter premises – seek advice/ assistance.
- Plan your action and seek management agreement.

IF VIOLENCE IS THREATENED – LEAVE IMMEDIATELY

Consider

- Parking in well lit areas.
- Not taking short cuts.
- Walking facing oncoming traffic.
- Avoiding groups of rowdy people.
- Carrying a torch in the dark.
- Having a personal alarm, phone or other lone worker safety device readily at hand.

On return to the car

- Have your keys ready.
- Check the interior before getting in.
- Lock the doors as soon as you get in.

Checking back with the team following a home visit

- If for whatever reason you find they will not be back at the expected time you must ring and let colleagues know of any alterations.
- If you have to make a first visit at the end of a shift, ensure that you have a mobile phone, and report back to base or to another designated person.

WHEN A COLLEAGUE DOES NOT RETURN AS EXPECTED

If one of your colleagues has not returned back to the office/base or rung in to confirm their whereabouts, then the first and most important thing is to remember not to panic! It may be that they have genuinely forgotten to let you know of changes to their plans or have been delayed.

In the first instance ask your other colleagues, or contact the Work Base to establish whether they have heard from that person, or have been properly notified of changes to their plans.

If not, ring their mobile phone number and check to see that they are safe.

If you receive no answer, or if they answer but sound distressed, then you should notify their Manager immediately. If they are not available, notify the most senior person on the premises and/or the Emergency Duty Team.

If it has not been possible to obtain an answer from their mobile, the Manager should then try to contact the person at home or through their next of kin **before contacting the police.**

In cases where the person answers but appears to be in distress, the police should be called immediately.

HOME VISITS CHECKLIST FOR STAFF

PRIOR TO VISITS HAVE YOU:

- Familiarised yourself with the Lone Working Policy, Violence at Work and local departmental procedures?
- Had all the relevant training for the prevention of violence and safe lone working?
- Ensured you are capable of defusing potentially dangerous situations and managing aggression?
- Got a good knowledge of your team's procedures for home visits?
- Carefully checked your visiting list for the day, to identify possible problems?
- Obtained as much information as possible from referrals?
- Checked records to assess potential risk from patients or their families?
- Asked a colleague/or police escort to visit with you if you are in any doubt about your safety?
- Checked the location of the visit and your travel route?
- Collected and checked suitable equipment?
- Ensured that you are not carrying a brief case or car stickers that suggest you have drugs or money with you?
- Have to hand a fully charged mobile phone along with emergency contact numbers?
- Let others know where you are going and how long you will be? Remember that you should contact the office regularly to update colleagues on your whereabouts and any changes to your work plan or if you do not intend to return to base after your last visit.
- Arranged for someone to make contact with you if your return is overdue?
- Reported any incidents during your visits?

GUIDANCE ON TRANSPORTING PEOPLE WHOM THEY SUPPORT IN EMPLOYEES VEHICLES

STAFF TRANSPORTING PEOPLE IN THEIR VEHICLES SHOULD CONSIDER:

- Only doing so in exceptional circumstances, not as a standard practise.
- Gaining a managers authorisation.
- Assessing your own capability at that time to transport the person.
- Phoning the destination or arranging for a colleague to phone destination for support on arrival.
- Assessing that your vehicle is suitable in accordance with the persons mobility requirements, getting in and out.
- Assessing whether the person is medically fit to be transported in your vehicle.
- Assessing whether the person is likely to present a risk of harm or distraction whilst driving.
- The distance and route to be taken.
- What mobility aids the person requires that may also need transporting.
- The suitability of your training in regards to their back care and the moving and handling of mobility aids.
- Using the Wheelchair Guidance.

- Securing mobility aids in the boot or back seat.
- Completing and comply with the management occupational road risk course.
- Having insurance to transport people for work purposes.
- Securing valuables in an appropriate place.
- Using the lone working risk guidance and risk assessment.
- Reporting any incidents to the relevant Manager as soon as practical after any events.
- Recording events in persons records as soon as practical after the event.
- Never assuming its ok to transport a person – plan to stay safe.

VISUAL WHEELCHAIR CHECK FOR PRACTITIONERS

In some exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for practitioner staff to assist a person whilst they are in their wheelchair. Agreement and risk assessment by the practitioner's line manager is required alongside the reading of and adhering to the Wheelchair Guidance and relevant training.

For practitioners to support a person in their wheelchair, a visual check of the wheelchair must be done to avoid injury/harm to either party. The practitioner must be satisfied with the results of the check before commencing any support.

• Visual Check List

- **Wheelchair:** CE marked?
- **Armrests:** secure, not damaged, remove/refit easily (where applicable)?
- **Backrest:** secure, no tears, folds appropriately/unfolds (where applicable)?
- **Seat:** no tear, not damaged, folds/unfolds (where applicable)?
- **Cushion:** fits wheelchair, no tears or damage?
- **Lap strap:** usable, fits around person?
- **Brakes:** good working order, not loose, check both sides?
- **Wheels:** good condition?
- **Tyres:** properly inflated, good condition?
- **Pushing handles/grips:** Secure, no damage, height adjustable?
- **Footplates/loops:** secure, no damage, removable?
- **Footplate latch:** good working order, locks in place?