

Buckingham Canal Society

Lone Worker Policy

This document explains how Buckingham Canal Society will protect their staff as far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with any health and safety risks for people working alone.

Purpose

Buckingham Canal Society is committed to providing a safe working environment as far as reasonably practical that meets the needs of its staff and volunteers. Consideration shall therefore be given to the health and safety implications in respect of lone working.

Policy

All staff and volunteers shall be made aware of this policy. Anyone who is or who potentially may be a lone worker shall receive information, instruction and relevant training in respect of all identified hazards and the risks involved and all associated risks e.g. violence and aggression and vehicles/driving.

- It is the responsibility of everyone to coordinate the risk assessment for lone workers in consultation with the Health and Safety Officer;
- Anyone who is lone working shall be provided with a communication link to the office base, normally a mobile phone;
- Anyone who is lone working shall be given the opportunity to be provided with a personal alarm application for the phone;
- Lone workers shall follow all instructions contained in the procedures below;
- It is the responsibility of the line manager/work party leader to regularly re-assess risks, reporting the time and dates of monitoring and any changes to the Health and Safety Officer;
- It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that workers do not suffer from undue stress as a consequence of lone working;
- It is recognised that some workers are required to work alone for significant periods of time without direct supervision and in these situations, Buckingham Canal Society will ensure that adequate support is provided.

Definition of lone working

Individuals are alone at work when they are on their own, they cannot be seen or heard by another worker, cannot expect a visit from another worker for some time and/or where assistance is not readily available when needed. Therefore, lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. This includes establishments where:

- Only one person works on the site or premises
- One person works separately from others at a site e.g. out of visual sight
- One person works outside normal hours
- Carrying out work in someone's office, meeting venue or home other than their own
- Working in premises that are not leased or managed by Buckingham Canal Society

Aims of the policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- Ensure that the risks of lone working are assessed regularly and that systems are put in place to minimise the risk as far as is practical;
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to staff and volunteers that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working and reduce the number of incidents/injuries relating to lone working.

Risk assessment

Risk assessments must be carried out for and by all individuals whose working practice makes them vulnerable and recommendations shall be made to eliminate or reduce the risk as far as possible. Where individuals work alone in buildings or sites, managers shall complete the relevant lone worker's checklist.

Procedure

Individuals will receive information, instruction and supervision in respect of the hazards and risks associated with lone working. All individuals are to take relevant and sensible precautionary measures whilst lone working. If a member of staff feels that they are putting themselves at risk through lone working, they shall discuss the situation with their line manager. Further efforts by the line manager shall be made to eliminate or reduce hazards starting with a process of reassessment of the task.

Communications capability

The Manager, or Trustee, initiating each lone working session shall ensure that the work location is within an area of mobile phone reception, or, if not, such a 'reception area' shall be found as close to the working area as is possible. This specific location shall be marked and identified within the relevant site plan as well as being notified to the lone worker and used as the communication point, prior to the work commencing and at its end, as indicated already. If no mobile phone coverage is available, alternative arrangements such as radios shall be used. If no radios are available and no phone coverage, then lone working will not be undertaken.

Risks of lone working

Risk assessments for site based lone workers must include:

- Safe entry and exit
- Location, e.g. remoteness, transport, parking
- Risk of violence e.g. history of violence from the public or others
- Safety of equipment for individual use
- Channels of communication in an emergency
- Site security
- Security arrangements i.e. alarm systems and response to personal alarms
- Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision

Risk assessments for mobile lone workers must include:

- Site or premises risk assessment where applicable
- Travelling between sites, meetings and appointments
- Reporting and recording arrangements
- Communication and traceability
- Arrangements for home visits including consideration of alternatives

- Personal safety and security

Following completion of risk assessment, consideration must be given to any appropriate action that is required.

Staff practices

Whenever staff or volunteers work within an office they shall try to ensure that there are other members of the Society in the building or on site

If a worker is meeting a client on their own in the office they shall ensure the client does not sit between them and the door and that they have clear access to leave via the door.

The staff or volunteers line manager must be told they are meeting with a client on their own and when the meeting

- If there are concerns about a client, they shall be seen in a large office with someone else present
- If this is not possible, rearrange the meeting
- If a member of staff is seeing clients in the office when no one else is around, check someone else is in the building and make sure the office door is left open
- Staff must record all details of any visits in their electronic diary which must be made available to all staff, including estimated time of return
- If there is a change to a member of staff's day, they must inform the manager of their expected arrival
- If a member of staff has not arrived by the stated time, a phone call will be made to contact that member of staff

When lone working, all staff shall (whether in the office or on site) follow the below actions. The normal designated associate will be their line manager or the Executive Officer or (by exception) a specific Trustee agreed at the time.

- Contact a designated associate and leave the following information before attending the visit:
 - Name
 - Destination
 - Expected time of arrival on site
 - Vehicle make and registration
 - Contact telephone number
- On arrival on site, telephone or text their designated associate with the following information:
 - The expected length of time on site
- On leaving the site, contact their designated associate with the following information:
 - Time of leaving the site
 - Expected home time or details of next destination
- On arriving at home/next destination, contact their designated associate with the following information:
 - They have arrived safely home, or if at a new destination give another "expected length of time on site". The process will then recommence until such time as the lone worker completes all works and has arrived safely home. The procedure ensures that the line manager is aware of the staff member's movements during the visit/s.

All delegated associates must be made aware of the line manager's number. In the event that the employee does not telephone their designated associate after an outreach, the associate must contact the line manager. The line manager will endeavour to contact the employee however if there is no response the police shall be informed.

General Support for Staff and Volunteers

All new staff and volunteers to Buckingham Canal Society shall receive an induction, including reference to the lone worker policy.

Staff and volunteers working for Buckingham Canal Society shall know that their safety comes first. They shall be aware of how to deal with situations in which they feel at risk or unsafe. They shall also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. Managers must therefore ensure that all lone workers' training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.