

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY - CORPORATE CODE OF PRACTICE

PERSONAL SAFETY & LONE WORKING

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The aim of this document is to identify the principal risks to the health and safety of employees and contractors arising from aggression and lone working and specify the general precautions that must be taken to eliminate or reduce these risks.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this guide the term 'aggression' refers to verbal and physical aggression or threats. 'Lone working' refers to any work activity where a member of staff is working alone away from others and where the normal support mechanisms are not available such as out of hours working.
- 1.3 There are specific legal requirements, duties and responsibilities contained within the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

2. TRAINING

- 2.1 All staff must be provided with sufficient instruction, training (Level 1 minimum) or supervision to be able to carry out their work safely.
- 2.2 Managers and supervisors should have sufficient experience or training to be able to identify the hazards involved in the work activities and to be able to put in place measures to reduce the chances of injury.
- 2.3 Any employee who is required to carry out risk assessments for personal safety or lone working should as a minimum have attended the Level 2 training modules.
- 2.4 Any employee who is required to use work equipment must be trained in its safe use. Training records should be kept and maintained.

3. RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 3.1 Personal safety issues can be included in general work activity risk assessments.
- 3.2 When risk assessments are being carried out on individual customers, regard must be had to the Exclusion and Incident Policy.
- 3.3 Lone working activities will require specific risk assessments that are supported by prescriptive Local Safety Practices.
- 3.4 The control measures referred to in the following generic assessments refer to the model guides to be found in Appendices A and B.

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**PERSONAL SAFETY & LONE WORKING
RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD**

HAZARD		TO WHOM	LIKELIHOOD (L)	SEVERITY (S)	RISK RATING (LxS)	EXISTING CONTROLS	ACTION REQUIRED
<u>Activity/equipment/ process etc</u>	<u>Possible injury harm</u>						
Travelling to destination - by car (daytime) - by car (night time callout) - on foot	Injury from road traffic accident	Driver and other road users	2	5	10	Appendix B: (3.0) Preparing (6.0) Driving (9.0) Out of hours	
	Injury from road traffic accident Falling asleep at wheel	Driver and other road users	3	5	15	Appendix B: (3.0) Preparing (6.0) Driving (9.0) Out of hours	
	Injury from attack or accident	Visiting officer	2	3	6	Appendix B: (3.0) Preparing (5.0) Walking	
Visiting/Inspecting premises	Verbal attack	Visiting officer	4	2	8	Appendix A Appendix B: (8.0) Entering premises	
	Injury from physical attack	Visiting officer	2	5	10	Appendix A	
	Held against will	Visiting Officer	2	3	6	Appendix A	
	Injury from attack by animals	Visiting officer	2	2	4	Appendix B: (8.12) Animals	

**PERSONAL SAFETY & LONE WORKING
RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD**

HAZARD		TO WHOM	LIKELIHOOD (L)	SEVERITY (S)	RISK RATING (LxS)	EXISTING CONTROLS	ACTION REQUIRED
<u>Activity/equipment/ process etc</u>	<u>Possible injury harm</u>						
Visiting/Inspecting premises/cont'd	Contract infectious disease	Visiting officer	3	3	9	COP 3	
	Injury from hazardous processes (chemical & physical)	Visiting officer	3	5	15	Staff trained to recognise hazards. Follow site instructions and warning notices. Gather any information on hazards that are present from property file, database, or datasheets. Provision of PPE	
	Injury from dilapidated premises and services in disrepair	Visiting officer	3	5	15	As above	
	Injury from fall from height (inc. ladder)	Visiting officer	2	5	10	COP 26 Follow site instructions and warning notices	

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**PERSONAL SAFETY & LONE WORKING
RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD**

HAZARD		TO WHOM	LIKELIHOOD (L)	SEVERITY (S)	RISK RATING (LxS)	EXISTING CONTROLS	ACTION REQUIRED
<u>Activity/equipment/ process etc</u>	<u>Possible injury harm</u>						
Interviewing at Civic Centre (Open plan)	Verbal attack	interviewing officer	4	2	8	Training and instruction Appendix A Exclusion Procedure	
	Injury from physical attack	Interviewing officer	2	5	10	Training and instruction. Appendix A Exclusion Procedure	
Interviewing at Civic Centre (enclosed rooms)	Verbal attack	Interviewing officer	4	2	8	Training and instruction Appendix A Exclusion Procedure	
	Injury from physical attack	Interviewing officer	2	5	10	Training and instruction Appendix A Exclusion Procedure	

5 KEY HEALTH AND SAFETY POINTS

5.1 Managers and supervisors must ensure that:

- All employees or contractors work in accordance with the adopted safe working practices and procedures.
- Employees are provided with sufficient levels of information, instruction, training and/or supervision.
- All accidents, incidents, near misses and problems are reported and recorded as soon as possible.
- Employees wear any Personal Protective Equipment that has been provided.
- All hazards are eliminated or minimised to reduce the risk of injury.
- They apply the exclusion procedure and incident list procedure when appropriate.
- All necessary documentation is maintained.

5.2 Employees must ensure that:

- They adhere to the adopted safe working practices and procedures.
- All accidents, incidents or near misses are reported to their manager or supervisor as soon as possible.
- They immediately bring to the attention of their manager or supervisor any uncontrolled hazards.
- They use work equipment in the correct manner and report any defects to their manager or supervisor.
- They wear any Personal Protective Equipment that has been provided for their safety and report any defects to their manager or supervisor
- They do not endanger themselves or others.

6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Reference Documentation

CORP 030 - Exclusion and Incident List Procedure
L101 Safe working in confined spaces

Health & Safety Executive website: [Violence](#)

HS(G)77 COSHH and peripatetic workers

HS(G)133 Preventing violence to retail staff

IND(G)69 revised 1996 Violence at work - a guide for employers

IND(G)226 Homeworking - guidance for employers and employees on health and safety

Training Options: [Learning & Development webpage](#)

APPENDICES A and B

GUIDES FOR PERSONAL SAFETY & LONE WORKING

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PERSONAL SAFETY

1 IF YOU FIND DEALING WITH CERTAIN SITUATIONS DIFFICULT, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DISCUSS THIS WITH YOUR MANAGER. FACING SUCH AN EVENTUALITY SHOULD BE SEEN AS A POSITIVE STEP AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS A FAILING.

ALL FIELD OFFICERS SHOULD ATTEND THE CORPORATE MANAGING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AND/OR THE LEVEL 1 LONE WORKER COURSES OR EQUIVALENT (AS APPROPRIATE).

1.1 Fear manifests itself in both a mental and physical reaction. If a person starts to feel uneasy, they are probably picking up danger or warning signals. Assess the situation by asking yourself:

- Is the person's anger directed at me?
- Are they upset rather than angry?
- Do I feel in danger? If you think you do, leave and seek help immediately.

1.2 Do not underestimate someone's hostility.

1.3 Do not respond aggressively. Aggression increases the likelihood of confrontation.

1.4 Try to stay calm. Do not raise your voice. Try to speak clearly and slowly. Avoid being drawn into an argument.

1.5 Try to talk the problem through and aim to placate the person focusing their aggression on you by avoiding aggressive body language, e.g. crossed arms, hands on hips, pointing - these tend to incite anger.

1.6 Try to use open gestures, keeping your palms facing upwards.

1.7 Remember if you feel in danger at any time - RETREAT.

2 If violence is threatened

2.1 Never put your hand on an angry person as this can be interpreted as threatening behaviour and may incite more anger.

2.2 Keep an eye on potential escape routes and stay between aggressor and the door. If possible stay behind a barrier e.g. desk, table.

2.3 Never turn your back on an aggressor. Gradually move backwards.

- 2.4 Never stay alone with extremely angry or violent persons. Be prepared to make a quick getaway if necessary.

3.0 In case of attack

- 3.1 It is very difficult to predict your reaction in such circumstances. It is imperative that you try to remain calm.
- 3.2 If attacked, TRY TO ESCAPE IMMEDIATELY. Use self-defence only as a last resort.
- 3.3 Run towards a place where you know there will be people.
- 3.4 Shout Fire, Fire! (this quickly attracts other people's attention).
- 3.5 Scream and yell. If you have a personal alarm, trigger it near aggressor's ears (be aware, that this may be considered as assault and must only be used as a last resort). Throw alarm away from your aggressor so that they cannot deactivate it.
- 3.6 If you are assaulted, physically restrained or obstructed and polite requests that you be allowed to leave are ignored, you may have no alternative but to use physical means to secure your escape. Any physical action should use the minimum of force and be related to an overall intention to escape as opposed to prolonging or antagonising such a situation.

4 Civic Offices Security

- 4.1 If there is a risk that an interview may result in an aggressive incident, then Security should be advised in advance. This will allow them to have sufficient resources available to assist if required.
- 4.2 If an unforeseen situation occurs that results in a member of staff (or other member of the public) being threatened or subjected to verbal or physical assault, then Security should be called immediately.
- 4.3 The Security service cannot physically detain or eject an aggressor and therefore if an assault has occurred or there is serious risk of an assault, the Police should be called.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR LONE WORKING

- 1.0 Details of next of kin including emergency telephone numbers are held by the Human Resources team. They must be informed of any changes to the contact details so that they can amend their records.
- 1.1 Up-to-date details of officers' vehicles: registration number, model, make and colour is kept in the office by the Manager. Details of any alternative vehicles that may be used must also be recorded.
- 1.2 Officers' vehicles should be well maintained and full of petrol to avoid breakdowns.
- 1.3 Officers are advised to join a motoring organisation to rescue and/or assist in case of breakdown.
- 2.0 **First aid**
- 2.1 There are a number of trained First Aiders in The Civic Centre and Fountain House. All accidents/incidents must be entered in the accident book.
- 2.2 A First Aid box is located on most levels within the Civic Centre and Fountain House
- 2.3 (A system must be established to ensure emergency first aid can be summoned.)
- 3.0 **Preparing for visits**
- 3.1 Check files, computer records and colleagues for any history of potential risks to health. (Also see Code of Practice 30.)
- 3.2 Identify by telephone any issues regarding health and safety at the location, e.g.
 - Risk of assault;
 - Access onto premises (commercial), Reception, parking areas, security arrangements and the need for any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- 3.3 Check maps to decide on the route.
- 3.4 Assess the potential risk of the situation you are likely to encounter. Decide if you need a colleague to assist.
- 3.5 Do not draw attention to yourself. Be as inconspicuous as possible:

- dress appropriately. Take the necessary PPE with you.
 - avoid carrying a handbag - leave in boot of car, being careful not to attract attention which could lead to your car being broken into.
 - wear shoes which do not inhibit you if you need to run.
- 3.6 Enter the anticipated length of visit AND your estimated time of return to the office, the address and your mobile phone number on the office notice board. (Or use lone worker monitoring service if subscribed.) **Switch the mobile phone on.**
- 3.7 Phone in if you intend to be more than **half an hour** later than your estimated time of return. Failure to do this may lead to unnecessary concern for your safety and possible referral to the Police. If making multiple visits, leave details on the office notice board in chronological order.
- 3.8 Inform Manager or Admin Team if you change your itinerary. They will amend the board accordingly.

4.0 Procedure following non-response from staff member at allotted time (office hours).

- 4.1 Members of the Team or the Manager will take the following action if the Officer does not return/respond within the allotted time:
- ring officer's mobile phone
 - phone premises involved in last known visit
 - phone other visit destinations previously notified
 - phone officer's home number
 - advise a Senior Officer
 - contact police and advise last known whereabouts of officer.
 - phone next of kin
- 4.2 Should you be the only member of staff working, i.e. making an early morning or early evening visit, you should inform Civic Security.

5.0 When Walking

- 5.1 Always take the safe route on made up paths.
- 5.2 Do not take short cuts.
- 5.3 Always use recognised pedestrian crossings.
- 5.4 At night try and keep to well lit areas. Ideally, carry a torch.

6.0 When driving

- 6.1 Ensure you have enough petrol.

- 6.2 Make sure car is well maintained.
- 6.3 In order to minimise the risk of unwanted persons getting into your car when stationary, always lock your car doors.
- 6.4 Never pick up hitchhikers.
- 6.5 Keep distance from car in front - do not intimidate.
- 6.6 Avoid eye contact with other drivers and never get into personal confrontations.
- 6.7 Carry enough coins or a phone card for use in emergency.
- 6.8 Do not sound your horn or flash your headlights in anger. This could antagonise other drivers.
- 6.9 If being followed, drive to a place where there are lots of people or head for police station. Don't lead anyone to your home.
- 6.10 Never pull over to confront another driver. If they force you to stop, stay in your car with windows up and lock doors and windows and call the Police. Should an aggressor leave their vehicle and approach your car on foot, if possible/safe to do so reverse away as aggressor approaches your vehicle and drive on.

7.0 When parking

- 7.1 Park in a well lit area.
- 7.2 If possible park your vehicle in such a manner to ensure a quick get away.

8.0 Going into peoples' homes/premises

- 8.1 Be alert to dangers.
- 8.2 Introduce yourself and show ID card.
- 8.3 Briefly explain reason for visit.
- 8.4 If person you arranged to visit with is not there or if the person you expect to see is not within the premises, do not enter the premises if you feel it is not safe to do so.
- 8.5 DO NOT ENTER IF PERSON IS INAPPROPRIATELY DRESSED. Allow them about 10-15 minutes to get dressed, then carefully assess if you want to enter alone.
- 8.6 Once inside, if possible, stay near an exit door.

- 8.7 Always make sure you know how to get out.
- 8.8 If a client locks you in their premises against your will, firmly ask them to unlock the door. If they refuse to unlock the door try not to show anger. Start negotiating. Remember that help may soon be on hand IF you booked out correctly as is outlined in paragraphs 6.6 to 6.9. (See also section 12- Dealing with aggression).
- 8.9 Do not get into a lift with anyone who makes you feel uneasy. Use stairs if in doubt.
- 8.10 Do not rely on a client to secure base of any ladder for you. If you anticipate climbing a ladder, take a colleague with you. Do not climb ladder unless it is securely fixed at the top and you feel safe climbing it.
- 8.11 If you are concerned about your safety - Retreat.
- 8.12 When visiting a premises where the owner has a dog, if you are uncomfortable, request that the dog be locked in another room. Where dogs roam the exterior of a premises, do not enter until the owner has them under control. Where dogs are exhibiting outward signs of aggression, do not enter until the dog has been restrained.
- 9.0 **MEASURES FOR NIGHT TIME AND OUT-OF-HOURS WORK (IN ADDITION TO 3.0 above).**
- 9.1 All out of hours workers should be accompanied by a colleague.
- 9.2 Arrange any rendezvous with a colleague in a safe place, e.g. Civic Centre, if travelling from home.
- 9.3 Carry a torch to locate the lock of your car quickly. Point torch towards the ground in order to avoid unwanted attention.
- 9.4 Always lock your car if you leave it, and look in the back seat before you get in.
- 9.5 Always approach your car with the key in your hand and be aware of who is around you.
- 9.6 If travelling from home, inform chosen lone working monitoring service service on leaving and on return.
- 9.7 Arrange with the out of hours service to call you if they have not heard from you within 30 minutes of when you told them that you would be leaving the premises/returning home.

9.8 If you do not phone, the monitoring service should phone you within 30 minutes of the expected time of your return. If they can't contact you, they'll inform the police that you are missing and will give them your last known whereabouts.

10.0 Interviewing members of the public in the Civic Centre

10.1 When interviewing on reception regard must be made to the provisions of paragraphs 3.1 above and the guide to Personal Safety.

10.2 When interviewing in an enclosed room, regard must also be had to the above paragraphs. Also, there are panic buttons located in the interview rooms that sound outside the rooms to alert other staff.

11.0 Out of hours working within the Civic Centre

11.1 Whenever Officers are working within the Civic Centre and Fountain House after normal office hours, they must inform Security of their presence in the building and where they will be working.

11.2 Officers should notify Civic Security on leaving the building.

Working From Home Assessment Questionnaire

Introduction

Working from home is where a member of staff uses their home as a base. It applies to visiting officers, inspectors, field officers and so on who leave home and go directly to their visits and then return home without going into the office.

The aim of this self-assessment questionnaire is to enable you to identify and control the risks to your health and safety from lone working. Additional guidance can be found in the Corporate Code of Practice 15 - Personal Safety & Lone Working.

You should ensure that::

- Before you go out on a visit you are aware of any potential hazards.
- You have advised your manager of where you are going and when you are likely to return.
- You have access to a telephone so that you can notify your manager of any changes to your itinerary or if your manager needs to contact you.
- There are emergency procedures in place.

Planning the visit

Is there a system in place to record any hazards at the premises you are going to visit?	Yes	No
Have you looked at the file for any risk assessments or details of known problems?	Yes	No
Have you visited the premises/client before? If not have you spoken with colleagues who have?	Yes	No
Do you know who you would expect to be at the premises?	Yes	No
If you are visiting with another colleague have you confirmed the details of where and when you will meet?	Yes	No
Do you have a mobile phone and is the number available to people in your office?	Yes	No
Have you advised your manager where you are going and when you are due to return home?	Yes	No
Do you know who to notify when you have finished your visits?	Yes	No
Are there arrangements in place if you do not contact the office or return home at the specified time?	Yes	No
Are your vehicle and next-of-kin details available to your manager?	Yes	No
If necessary does your next-of-kin know who to contact?	Yes	No

If any of your answers to the above questions is 'No' you should discuss the issues with your manager.