

human  
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# lone working policy, procedures & guidance

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## 1 introduction

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to identify hazards associated with working, assess the risks involved, and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks. This includes the risk to lone workers.

A lone worker is a person who is engaged in solo work activities, or activities where contact with colleagues will be irregular or infrequent.

In preparation for lone working to take place, this policy and its procedures have been created to outline how lone working will be controlled and managed and the procedures that will be put into place to control the risks associated with lone working.

The lone working will usually involve a Randstad worker undertaking work in a person's home or in a public place. This may be to undertake a variety of roles but most typically will be as a Tutor, Teacher or a Support Worker. For simplicity these will all be referred to as workers in this document.

## 2 policy

To comply with Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Randstad will:

- Ensure that any individual engaged in lone working is suitable for the task.
- Ensure that the work activities can be carried out safely by the unaccompanied person.
- Provide a risk assessment process that will assess and address the specific risks associated with each lone working placement.
- Provide suitable systems of work, and equipment to ensure the safety of employees.
- Provide suitable training and instruction to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers.
- Maintain adequate and auditable training records, instruction and resources. (Copies will be available to lone workers if required.)

### **3 risk assessments**

Risk assessments are to be completed by the worker on their first contact with the service user at the nominated location. Completed assessments are to be returned to Randstad within seven working days so that they can be reviewed and any additional measures put into place. Randstad will supply a copy of the confirmed risk assessment to the worker once it has been reviewed. This process is to protect both the Randstad worker and the service user.

Where risks are deemed to be unsatisfactory or significant Randstad will not permit the worker to continue work with the service user until these have been managed and are deemed to be as low as is reasonably practicable.

### **4 worker checks**

When selecting workers for lone working Randstad will only assign individuals that are sufficiently experienced to understand the risks associated with lone working. Before the worker is permitted to carry out any work Randstad will ensure that:

- All workers are fit and capable of carrying out the assigned task.
- They are appropriately qualified to carry out the tasks for which they have been employed.
- Possess a mobile telephone.
- Have been DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checked.
- Have completed suitable induction training and demonstrated their competence in an assessment.

### **5 training**

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in difficult situations. The training that will be implemented is critical to help avoid panic reactions in unusual situations.

The Induction Training given to workers will be an information pack that details the systems provided for their protection, and their responsibilities within the system. This includes specific lone worker eLearning

All workers will be trained to introduce and raise awareness of the subject of personal safety before they are allowed to carry out any visits.

### **6 pre visit information**

Randstad will receive information regarding the support required from the client, the DSA2 letter, needs assessment report or through direct information provided by the service user. This information will be used to perform a desk top assessment to identify whether the initial visit can be done safely and if suitable arrangements can be put in place to cater for the worst case scenario or emergencies.

In assessing the risk, the Randstad representative will consider the following for a person working alone:

- The remoteness and isolation of the person being visited
- The likely hazards that may be present
- The likelihood of assault – verbal and physical, and/or sexual, or accusation of these
- Historical data

## **7 initial visit – specific risk assessment**

The initial visit with the end user will be conducted by the worker (in some cases where risks such as violence or harm have been identified, a minimum of two people may attend to provide security whilst the level of risk is being assessed) and a risk assessment will be undertaken using a dedicated initial assessment form. The findings from this initial visit will be clearly identified on the form and suitable controls instigated.

## **8 pre lone working familiarisation**

To ensure lone workers are fully informed of the risks they may be exposed to and the precautions in place to control them, the clients information folder will contain the risk assessments carried out and any hazards identified.

All workers will familiarise themselves with the specific details to ensure they are aware of the identified risks before a visit.

## **9 pre lone working considerations**

Whenever visiting a student's home, it is important that basic precautions are followed to minimise the risk. Training will help the lone worker to identify dangerous conditions and make them aware of the precautions they should consider.

Workers will be instructed to avoid risk wherever possible, and know how to deal with difficult situations if they occur.

The lone worker should pre plan and get as much information as possible before making the first visit to a new location. Information should include:

- Location – is it in a high risk area?
- Is parking available close by?
- Is the area well lit – particularly important in winter months?
- Is there likely to be anyone at the location that has a history of aggression or violence?

## **10 driving and parking**

When driving to meetings, try to plan where you will park before you go and park as close to your destination as possible. If you will be returning after dark, consider what the area will be like then and try to park near street lights.

- Keep the car doors locked when driving
- When parking in a car park, consider where the entrances and exits are. Try to avoid having to walk across a lonely car park to get to your car. Park away from pillars/barriers. Always reverse into your space so you can drive away easily
- Keep valuables out of sight in your car – put them in the car boot before you leave, not when you get there.
- When approaching your car, be aware of your surroundings, have your keys ready and check that no one is inside before entering quickly
- If you break down, check out your surroundings and only get out of your car when and if you feel it is safe to do so
- Road rage incidents are rare and can often be avoided by not responding to aggression from other drivers
- If the driver of another car forces you to stop and then gets out of his/her car, stay in your car, keep the engine running and if you need to, reverse to get away

- If intimidated while driving, continue to the nearest police station or public area, e.g. petrol station.

## **11 personal safety and aggression**

Very few violent incidents are spontaneous, in nearly all cases there will be warning signs that a person is becoming increasingly aggressive and may become violent. The trick is to be able to recognise these warning signs and act on them before something serious occurs. Common signs include:

- Increased body tension, agitation, excitability
- Withdrawal
- Lack of concentration
- Violent hallucinations or delusions

Behavioural changes usually follow a set pattern:

- Agitation e.g. wringing hands, pacing fidgeting
- Disruption e.g. tapping or clicking fingers or making a noise
- Destruction e.g. damage to objects and furniture
- Threat of physical harm
- Physical harm

The earlier in this sequence that the potential for violence is recognised the more effective the control measures will be. Once a person reaches the final stage they will be very difficult if not impossible to stop.

Lone workers should be vigilant at all times and avoid intimidating the person. The lone worker will:

- Talk in normal tones.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Listen empathetically.
- Speak firmly but politely.
- Keep their own temper under control.
- Adopt a non threatening posture.
- Maintain an appropriate physical distance from the service user.

If a lone worker is unable to reason with a person, they should consider making a strategic withdrawal and notify Randstad. A sensible precaution for all visits is to have an escape route to reach a safe place.

Whenever a form of aggression or violence has occurred the risk assessment will be reviewed. The outcome may include stopping lone working to that location but subsequent visits could be rescheduled with a minimum of two people.

## **12 arrival at location and during the meeting**

Give some thought before you arrive as to what exit strategies you could use if you felt uncomfortable or threatened.

Conduct your own risk assessment on the doorstep before you enter. If you feel at all uncomfortable or unsure, make an excuse and leave. Trust your instincts.

Be mindful of the fact that you are entering someone else's territory. Your presence there may be unwanted and/or pose a threat.

As you enter, make a note of how the door opens and closes so that you can leave quickly, if necessary.

### **13 post visit adjustments**

Following any visit, it is important to update the risk assessment whenever a change has occurred. In addition, Randstad will review each file annually and identify any changes that may require additional / alternative control measures.

### **14 safety in public places**

Concrete and metal barriers have been installed in many public places to prevent vehicle movements. However there are also many older streets and shopping areas that do not have these. So how can you help to protect yourself from a potential terrorist vehicle attack?

Ask yourself this question - Could a vehicle be driven directly down the road and onto the pedestrian area? If the answer is yes, consider these six tactics:

- Walk on the right hand side of the road so that you are facing the oncoming traffic
- Keep close to the building line not near the kerb
- Watch for the flow of people and sounds
- Don't sit in a cafe or restaurant with your back to the road, always sit facing the road so that you can have maximum vision. If you hear anything unusual look, establish the risk and react
- Never wear headphones in public places as this will prevent you from hearing and being aware of what is happening around you
- Don't wear high heels when commuting or shopping. Consider flat shoes that are easy to move in

If you hear shouts and screams you should immediately look for a place of cover, something that would stop a vehicle. A bench or litter bin is not sufficient. Look for concrete structures and solid base furniture that will offer you impact protection and cover from sight.

Do Not:

- Run in straight lines - If you need to run from danger it better to zig zag than run in a straight line.
- Run with a crowd - People tend to act like sheep and follow each other in critical situations, this can increase your risk. Make a decision and act on it, don't just automatically do what the crowd is doing.
- Ignore the advice and direction of the security/emergency services in charge at the scene.

Always be aware of what is going on around you. Keep up to date with national and local media and look for indicators from the security and emergency services. Extra security such as armed Police is a sign of reassurance but is also an indicator that there may be an increased risk. You should therefore plan where you walk and where you sit down. If possible ensure you are in an area where there is roadside furniture that can offer protection. It is never a bad idea to formulate a plan in your head.

## **15 monitoring – lookout call system**

All lone workers will be provided with a fully automated monitoring and safety system. LookOut call is the favoured system and is based on mobile phone and computer technology. Lone workers log on to the system when they start work via their mobile phones and tell the system where they are going and how long they think they will be there.

The lone worker provides the system with information about what they are doing, and the route taken to get there. This information is updated by the lone worker as they move from appointment to appointment.

LookOut call creates a series of countdown reminders and will text reminders when the time is nearly up. If additional time is needed at the appointment it can extend count down timers.

The LookOut call system will be used to provide a full scale alarm if the countdown timer reaches zero.

The system will check for false alarms by sending the individual a text and contact an appointed person or the Police if necessary.

LookOut call operates 24 hours a day every day of the year including Christmas day and bank holidays. This ensures workers are appropriately protected.

## **16 personal alarms**

The most common misconception is that a personal alarm is used to attract the attention of passers by. Unfortunately, you cannot rely on a personal alarm to do that for you. Firstly, there may not actually be anyone within earshot. Secondly, and most importantly, hearing an alarm does not necessarily encourage people to help. The purpose of a Personal Safety Alarm is to shock and disorientate an attacker, giving you vital seconds to get away.

Remember that a personal alarm should be just one part of your personal safety plan: there are lots of other ways in which you can help yourself to avoid violence and aggression. Once you have set off your alarm, leave the situation as quickly as you can, moving to a busy area if possible. Don't wait to check that your alarm has had the desired effect, just go.

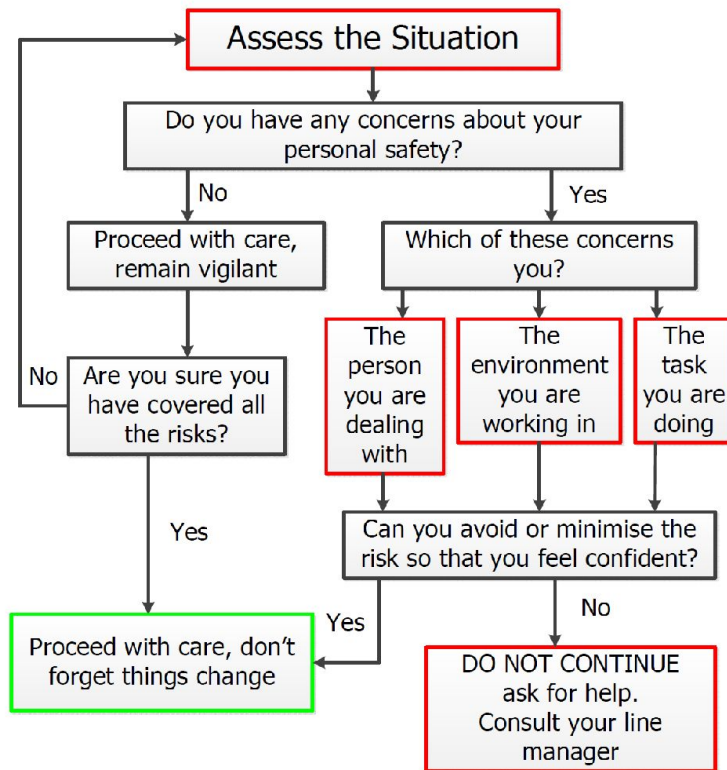
The company recommends that all lone workers carry a Personal Attack Alarm while lone working.

## **17 emergency procedures**

Using the below flow chart will help in your personal safety decision making. This should not be a one off assessment but ongoing while you are in the particular situation. Consider three aspects when using this system:

- People
- Environment
- Task

You may find the acronym PET helpful in remembering this.



## 18 incident reporting

Following any incident or near miss (a near miss is an event not causing harm, but has the potential to cause injury or ill health in slightly different circumstances) it is important that an incident report is completed. This will allow Randstad to investigate the incident and put in place support measures and make any changes necessary to reduce the risk of a recurrence.