

Darenth Parish Council

Lone/Home Working Policy

Policy Statement

Darenth Parish Council takes the health and safety of its employees seriously. We have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our employees while at work. We realise that at any given time, staff may be working alone, either in our office space or externally.

Aim and Scope

This policy is designed to alert employees to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is designed to give employees a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

Related Policies and Procedures

Lone Working Risk Assessment Lone Working Procedure

Related Legislation

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Context

Darenth Parish Council has a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees while at work. At any given time, employees may be alone, either in our premises or when operating on our behalf externally. We are responsible for assessing the risks to lone workers and taking steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. Employees have responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others in lone working situations. Taking precaution can reduce the risks associated with working alone. This policy is designed for employees who either frequently or occasionally work alone. It also refers to both high and low risk activities.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. For example:

- People working separately from others in a building
- People who work outside 'normal' hours
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues
- People who work at home other than in low risk, office-type work

The definition covers staff in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures.

Potential Hazards of Working Alone People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur when there is no-one to call for help or first aid available
- Fire
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building for example, danger of being accidentally locked in
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone

Measures to reduce the risk of lone working

To reduce the risk for people working alone we carry out a risk assessment of the following issues, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access.
- The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk.
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations.
- Any other special circumstances.

All available information should be taken into account and risk assessments should be updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

In any situation where an employee is operating alone and feels unsafe, they must remove themselves from that situation immediately.

In any situation where an employee is operating alone and an incident occurs, this must be reported to the their line manager as soon as possible. An incident is any situation where the health and safety of the employee is compromised and may include and accident, fire, violence or threat of violence (this is not exhaustive).

Supervision

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. We ensure that you understand the risks associated with your work and the relevant safety precautions.

- Employees new to a role where they may be lone working may need to be accompanied initially
- Regular contact by phone may be appropriate and we ensure that employees carrying out duties alone have a mobile phone available at all times to enable them to contact the office in the event of an emergency.

Accidents and Emergencies

Employees operating alone should be made aware of the process for responding correctly to emergencies.

Employees who are alone in the office must inform their line manager and are responsible for adhering to security and fire regulations.

Conclusion

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other staff, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors.

Darenth Parish Council ensures that measures are in place to reduce risk and that expectations have been communicated to employees operating alone.

All staff, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and should take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with carrying out their normal duties.

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