CARDIFF COUNCIL

CODE OF GUIDANCE

<u>**LONE WORKING**</u>

This Code of Guidance is produced for the guidance of employees and managers of employees who work alone. Guidance in respect of lone working is also provided in Codes of Guidance on Peripatetic Employees and Driving and in the Council's Violence at Work Policy. Guidance may also appear in more job specific Codes of Guidance e.g. working in confined spaces.

The Code of Guidance addresses the following:

1.0   Who are lone workers.
2.0   Risk assessments and lone workers.
3.0   Duties of employees.

1.0   Who are lone workers?

Lone workers are those who work by themselves at any time without close or direct supervision. They are found in a wide range of situations and include:

(i)   People in fixed establishments where:
•   only one person works on the premises
•   people who work separately from others*
•   people who work outside normal hours

* Note: This includes people in isolated areas of sites or premises where other people are present elsewhere.

(ii)   Peripatetic employees working away from their fixed base.

2.0   Risk assessments and the lone worker

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone but the duties of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply. These duties include identifying hazards of the lone work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measure in place to avoid or control the risks.

When assessing the risks to lone workers and appropriate control measures, the following should be considered in relation to the lone working aspect of the work. Please note the issues detailed are not exhaustive and <u>each individual work situation must be assessed</u>. (Further guidance on carrying out risk assessments is given in the Code of Guidance - Risk Assessments and specific guidance on carrying out risk assessment in relation to risk of violence is contained in the Council's Violence at Work Policy).

i)   Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person?

•   Does the work present a special risk to the lone worker?

•   Does at least one other person need to be present? E.g. excavations, confined spaces, some electrical work, work with ladders, scaffolding or with young persons working at prescribed dangerous machinery.

•   Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person?

•   Can all equipment be safely handled and used by one person?

•   Can all plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?

•   Can any manual handling be carried out safely by one person?

•   Is there a risk of violence?

•   Are young persons especially at risk if they work alone?

ii)   Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

iii) What training is necessary to ensure competency to work alone?

•   Lone workers must receive training before they commence working alone to ensure they are competent to do so. The training will need to cover risks, safe systems of work, actions in the event of emergencies and supervision procedures. Refresher training will be necessary to ensure workers are following procedures and as an opportunity to review existing systems and procedures.

iv)   How will the person be supervised? e.g.:

•   Supervisors periodically visiting and observing people working alone.

•   Regular contact between the lone worker and a supervisor/base e.g. by telephone or radio.

•   Establishment of systems to determine the location of lone workers e.g. diary left at the workers base.

•   Automatic warning devices/procedure that operates if contact is not maintained with the lone worker.

•   Checks that the lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task.

Supervisors are responsible for risk assessing lone work, introducing, maintaining and reviewing safe systems of work, and ensuring appropriate training is provided.

Note: Supervision procedures must be documented and tested on a regular basis.

v) What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident, or there is an emergency?

Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events including emergencies and appropriate procedures put in place.

Once the risks of the lone working have been identified and assessed, control measures need to be introduced to reduce or eliminate the risks. Control measures may include:

- instruction, training and supervision
- issue of personal alarms
- issue of mobile telephones/radios
- diary at workplace showing work locations of peripatetic employees during working hours and expected time of return
- procedures to ensure employees have finished work safely if they are not returning to the workplace
- procedures requiring lone workers to check in regularly by phone or radio
- liaison with other employers
- on arrival at a site under the control of a third party, the employee reporting to a responsible person
- provision of portable first aid kits
- 'permit to work' procedures
- panic buttons for use in an emergency

When risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker e.g. working in a confined space, some electrical work, where there is a high risk of violence, arrangements must be made to ensure that the worker does not work alone. Staff should be clearly aware of and understand what can and cannot be done whilst working alone.

3.0 Duties of employees

It is the duty of the individual employee to carry out lone working activities in the way in which the risk assessment has shown to be the best to control the risk and to comply with safe systems and procedures of work. Where there is any doubt about the employee's ability to work to agreed methods, the employee should not commence the work until he/she has discussed the situation with their line manager and a specific safe system of work has been introduced or an existing procedure amended. The general principle of 'if in doubt, see your line manager' must apply.

4.0   Exchange of Information

Information about risks and emergency procedures should be given to lone workers from other organisations who visit Council premises.

Council employees who visit premises other than their normal place of work should be given information on risks and emergency procedures by the occupier of premises.

Further information:

1.CM.060: Code of Guidance – Risk Assessment
1.CM.017: Code of Guidance – Driving

1.CM.056: Cardiff Council Violence at Work Policy