Four Steps to Protect Lone Workers: Workplan



Many of the procedures and precautions taken for general employee safety and health are applicable and necessary for those employees who work alone. However, as a supervisor you do need to take into consideration additional factors for lone workers. Follow the steps in this workplan to help you develop or enhance your current *Lone Worker Policy* and train and protect your lone workers.

1. **Perform a Risk Assessment**

Can the hazards of the work be managed safely by one person? Hazards must include normal work procedures and conditions as well as potential equipment failure, sudden illness/injury, fire, and other possible emergencies.

Consider:

- Special risks
- Safe access/egress
- Hazardous:
    - Substances
    - Energy
    - Confined spaces
    - Equipment
- Potential for violence (theft, assault, etc.)
- Groups who may be at higher risk
    - Women
    - Young/older workers
    - Physical limitations
- Fitness for the work/task

2. **Safe Work Practices and PPE**

Establish safe work practice controls and PPE requirements based on the hazards and risks you've identified.

Consider:

- The process by which standard operating procedures will be communicated – including training and follow-up to ensure understanding.
- Who will help and oversee that the lone worker understands the risks, safe work practices?
- How will the lone worker obtain the required PPE and replace damaged PPE?
- Remote location considerations:
    - Safe access to rest, hygiene, refreshment, and first aid facilities and supplies.
    - Safe travel to, from, and around the work location after-hours.

3. **Communication Plan**

Have a written plan for communication in your *Lone Worker Policy* and for each job establish specific communication procedures.

Consider:

- Communication procedures and equipment
    - Frequency and time of check-ins
    - Who to call
    - What criteria/event triggers a call
    - How will communication occur – cell phone, radio, telephone
- Warning devices needed or used
    - Movement alarms
    - Panic alarms
    - Automatic distress systems
- When work is scheduled to begin and end each day
- Code words or special procedures for potentially violent situations

4. **Emergencies**

You must be prepared and have a plan in place for lone workers in emergency situations. The recommendations below could be mandatory for your location. If they are not, you should still take them into consideration for the safety of your workers.

Recommendations and Requirements:

- Make emergency services aware of the work/worker and ensure they can access the area as quickly as possible. This is especially critical in remote locations.
- Verify lone workers have been trained and understand what to do in an emergency.
    - You've prepared them for any foreseeable emergencies and emergency response in general.
    - Use the risk assessment to identify foreseeable events.
- Provide a written copy of the emergency procedures and danger areas.
- Train lone workers in first aid and provide access to adequate first-aid facilities.
- Mobile workers should carry a first-aid kit suitable for treating minor

injuries.