



Burton upon Stather Parish Council

Lone Worker Policy

1. Introduction

Burton upon Stather Parish Council recognises that its employee(s) are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of office hours. Under the Health & Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Burton upon Stather Parish Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employee(s) have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of Burton upon Stather Parish Council staff and Councillors when conducting work for the council in the community.

3. Definition

The Health & Safety Executive defines lone workers as “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”. This covers Burton upon Stather Parish Council’s Clerk, who is required to carry out his/her duties for all or part of their working day working in isolation and is entitled to support and protection. There are a number of situations where the Clerk will work alone. These may include but are not restricted to:

- Working alone in the Parish Office
- Visiting Parish Council land
- Driving on behalf of the Council

4. Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

- a) increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working
- b) ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
- c) ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff in all areas that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.
- d) ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who must work alone.
- e) encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Councillors and the Clerk are responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy;
- taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees;
- ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly and shared with all staff
- where reasonable and practicable put procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- ensuring that staff identified as lone workers are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updating and refreshing this training as necessary;
- ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident; and
- providing a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment, as required and identified in a risk assessment.

5.2 Employees are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- following guidance and procedures designed for safe working;
- reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate and complete an accident form;
- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy;
- immediately reporting to the Clerk/ Chair/Vice Chair any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone; and
- always maintain good communication to minimise risk.

6. Guidance for Risk Assessments of Lone Working

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. Assessment will be carried out and recorded with all staff lone working. Recommendations will be made to eliminate or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

Risk assessments for site based lone workers will include:

- is the person fit and suitable to work alone;
- safe access and exit;
- risk of violence;
- are women especially at risk if they work alone;
- safety of equipment for individual use;
- channels of communication in an emergency;
- site security;
- security arrangements, i.e. alarm systems and response to personal alarms;
- level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.

Risk assessments for mobile lone workers will, additionally, include:

- travelling between sites;
- identify any specific risks associated with individual sites
- reporting and recording arrangements;
- communication and traceability and personal safety/security.

Following completion of the Risk Assessment consideration will be given to any appropriate action that is required.

7. Incident Reporting

An incident is defined as “an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events or near miss, that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage”. In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk/Chair/Vice Chair who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or “unsafe” (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

8. Contacting/Involving the Police

The Council is committed to protecting its staff and councillors from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process. Except in the cases of emergency, staff should inform the Clerk/Chair/Vice Chair of any incident immediately. The Clerk /Chair/Vice Chair will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

9. Support for Staff

Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk /Chair/Vice Chair will ensure that all lone workers’ training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

10. Immediate Support following a Violent Incident

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk/Chair/Vice Chair will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours, the Council’s Chair/Vice Chair should be contacted. The Clerk/Chair/Vice Chair will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. The Clerk/Chair/Vice Chair will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

11. Lone Working for all Staff

Where the items above relate directly to the Clerk as a staff member the appropriate controls will be exercised by the Chair/Vice Chair of the Council. If the items above relate directly to other staff members, the appropriate controls will be exercised by the Clerk. During supervision meetings and Annual Appraisal, there should be an item covering any issues related to lone working. Any concerns, training issues or requests for additional support should be shared and discussed as part of this item. Any issues arising must be remedied at the earliest opportunity.

12. Good Practice for Lone Workers, as Identified in the Risk Assessment

- During their working hours, all staff leaving the workplace must phone or text the Clerk/Chair/Vice Chair to notify them of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back

- If a visit is assessed to have a sufficient risk, arrangements should be made for staff to be accompanied.
- Telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague/councillor may also be advisable.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries – to be reported if used.
- Lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- Staff should never transport a child on their own and should assess any risk before transporting a vulnerable adult alone. ("A vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is 18 years of age or over, and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.")
- No staff or Councillors should make home visits alone. Before making home visits an assessment of possible hazards and risks should be made

13. Exemptions

Employees and volunteers are exempt from working alone in certain situations:

- Young persons under instruction in a fixed base (example work experience, helping with council tasks etc.)
- Where activities and work with substances/machinery could be hazardous to health.