

Dersingham Parish Council

LONE WORKING POLICY

1. Introduction

The following policy and procedure have been written in order to minimise risks for staff working alone at their fixed base and working away from their fixed base. Under the Health & Safety Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Dersingham Parish Council has a legal obligation to look after the health, safety and welfare of their employees. However, employees of the Council 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 Dersingham Parish Council staff.

Lone Working/Lone Workers

These are people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision

At a fixed base (office or other):

- Only one person working in the office or other premises
- Working separately from others, e.g. in different locations

Away from their fixed base:

Staff member who is required to travel alone to and from a fixed base to another location, making a site visit, meeting an individual away from the office or to attend meetings, training courses, conferences etc.

3. Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase employee awareness of personal safety issues relating to lone working
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way
- Ensure that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that employees are able to recognise the risks
- Ensure that there is full reporting and recording of any incidents relating to lone working.
- Where incidents are reported and recorded that any necessary action is taken and the policy amended if necessary.

4. Potential Risks to Lone Workers

- Open access and unlocked doors – accessible to the public, contractors, users of the centre etc.
- Being taken ill whilst at work
- Lack of training regarding Health & Safety procedures.
- Hazards in the workplace.
- Remote areas.
- Parking arrangements: poorly lit and isolated areas.

5. Assessing the Risk

Before drawing up and recording the assessment of risk, it must be established:

- Whether the work can be done by a lone worker
- What arrangements will be in place to ensure an individual is not exposed to unnecessary and unacceptable risk?

When recording an assessment of risk, the following should be taking into consideration:

- Environment – location, security, access/egress
- Context – nature of the task
- History – have there been any accidents/incidents in the past

All available information should be taken into account and updated as and when necessary. If there is reason for doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation then consideration should be given for making other arrangements to complete the task.

6. Safety Guidelines

For staff working in a fixed base:

- Familiarise yourself with the layout of the building including fire exits and escape routes
- Keep doors locked that allow direct access to the building/office where you are working
- Keep office door locked when visiting other parts of the building
- Outside of normal office opening hours do not open the door to unexpected visitors. In the case of contractors ask for identification. If still unsure check with the contractor's employer/head office
- Have contact numbers at hand to be able to contact relevant person(s) immediately (should they feel ill, they suspect an intruder in the building etc.)
- Park as near as they can to the building
- A risk assessment to be put in place to assess potential risks

For staff working away from their fixed base:

- Staff should inform relevant person(s) from the Council of their movements including the time they estimate they will be away from their base and when they will return, along with relevant information regarding where and at what time, visits will be made and to whom
- Leave details of venues including contact numbers
- Take mobile phone (or other communication device) with them
- Avoid meetings in isolated places. If this cannot be avoided, ask someone accompany them or make sure they always notify someone when they arrive and leave.

7. Responsibility

Employees Responsibility & Personal Safety:

- To take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves as well as other persons
- Always maintain a line of communication on a regular basis with members of the Council to identify and minimise risk(s)
- Always inform someone as to when they leave the fixed base to perform Council tasks and inform a colleague when returning to a fixed base after relevant task completed
- Always report an accident /incident that may occur to the Chairman or relevant person to allow for a full investigation to take place and complete an accident report.

Employers Responsibility:

- To take reasonable care for the health & safety of staff by identifying and assessing potential risks to ensure that staff are safe at all times
- Always maintain a line of communication on a regular basis with staff to identify and minimise risk(s)
- Ensure staff receives all relevant training and information available
- Ensure staff have a means of maintaining contact and agree a system of reporting at regular times when away from the normal place of work

8. Exemptions

Employees 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.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Council to ensure that it is relevant to working practice.