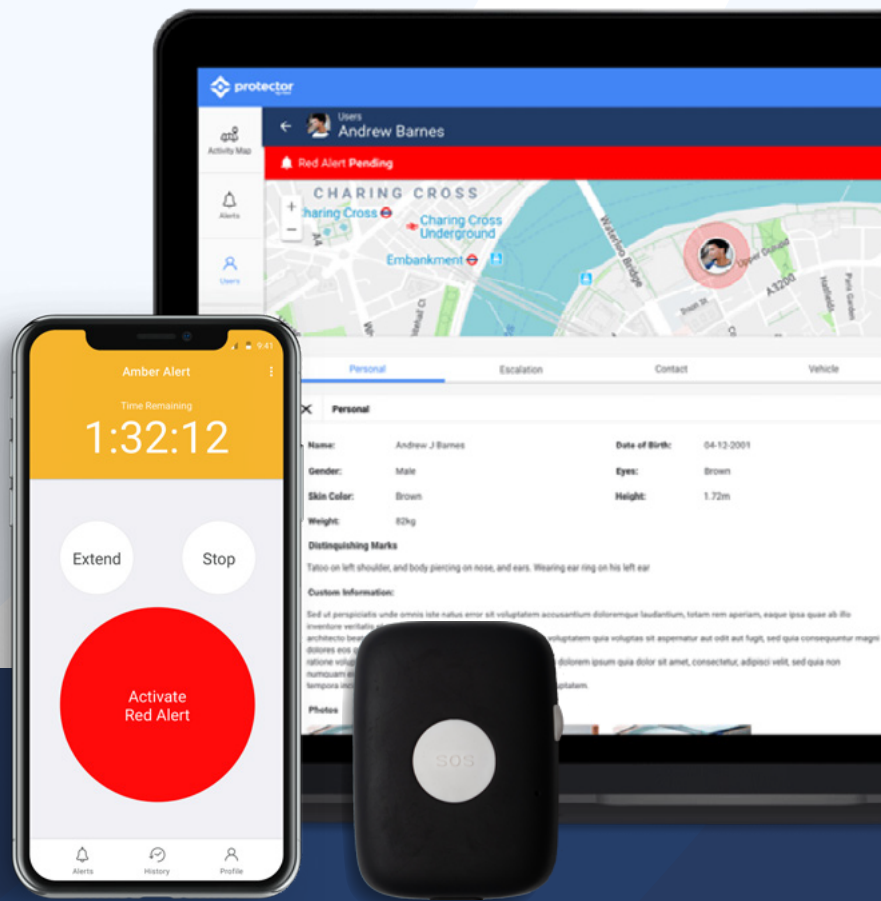


# Employers' Legal Obligations For Protecting Lone Workers?

Who do you think of when you hear the term "lone worker"?



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## What Lone Working Involves



Many roles, in many sectors require an element of solitary and / or mobile work.

Perhaps you imagine a farmer out in the country, a late-night security guard, or an engineer sent out to fix a break in the electrical grid.

But a health visitor? A traffic warden? Or bar staff closing down after last orders?

The truth is: many roles, in many sectors, require an element of solitary and/or mobile work.

What's more, [increasing numbers](#) of traditionally office-based jobs are being carried out by home workers, where advances in technology are making it more and more common for employees to go about their working day without so much as seeing a colleague.

Of course there are many benefits to lone working – being able to work from home, for example, is shown to [boost productivity](#), [lower costs](#) and [improve job satisfaction](#). But, at the same time, lone working practices raise specific – important – questions related to employee safety and wellbeing.



Company directors have a legal responsibility to keep employees safe, wherever they are.

**6-8M** Lone Workers  
In The UK

**20%** Of The British  
Workforce

If you employ lone workers or are intending to do so in the near future, you're no doubt committed to ensuring their safety. Here are some of your legal obligations towards your lone workers and how you can ensure you meet them:

- ➔ To put it simply, if a person can't be seen or heard by a fellow employee or supervisor for *all or part* of their working day, they are considered a lone worker. The UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone working as "...Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision."
- ➔ This means that even employees who travel frequently for work, those who work late after everyone else has left, or people who work unaccompanied but with members of the public also fit the definition of lone workers.
- ➔ These days, lone working is commonplace across a wide variety of employment sectors, including industry, healthcare, the charity and not-for-profit sector, services, local authorities, retail and hospitality and construction.
- ➔ It is estimated that there are currently 6 to 8 million lone workers in the UK – a figure which represents approximately 20% of the UK workforce. However, many more employees may work alone for at least part of the day, and therefore be exposed to similar risks as full-time lone workers.
- ➔ As a result, lone worker safety is a topic which should be on *every business's agenda*.



### Most Common types of non-fatal workplace injuries

- 29%** Slips, trips, falls on same level
- 20%** Handling, lifting or carrying
- 10%** Struck by moving object
- 8%** Acts of violence
- 8%** Falls from height
- 25%** All others

### Industries with higher than average rates of workplace injury

- 4.1%** Agriculture, forestry & fishing
- 2.4%** Construction
- 2.2%** Accommodation / food service

## Risks Associated With Lone Working

True, certain occupations can carry greater risk for lone workers.

Mental health workers, for example, are often required to work in pairs when visiting patients who may have aggressive tendencies. But, did you know that shop-workers and public transport drivers both suffer [above average incidents](#) of workplace violence?

Specific examples aside, lone working is not always inherently more risky than traditional team-based employment. Many of the risks associated with lone working are consistent with those found in all types of work environments, notably people risk common workplace hazards such as falls or moving vehicles, and health-related incidents, such as heart attacks or strokes.

But while speedy intervention from colleagues can mitigate those risks in more traditional workplaces, lone workers can find themselves in particular danger due to the isolated nature of their activity.

Added to this, working alone can have an impact on mental health. Employees who spend their days on their own outside the office can, at best, struggle to feel part of a company culture or, at worst, begin to fear for their personal safety.

In fact, a survey published by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust recently found that up to [81%](#) of *all* lone workers have felt at risk from violence or aggression.

# Employers' Responsibilities to Lone Workers

## 581,000

"In 2018/19, self-reported injuries reached 581,000 (an increase from 2017/18 which was only 555,000). However, the official injuries reported to RIDDOR decreased by 2.6% Year-on-Year with 69,208 recorded by employers."

## £54.5 M

"As a result of these injuries, £54.5 million in fines were issued to duty holders found guilty of health and safety offences, which is an average fine of £150,000 per case. These fines account for 78% of the total number of convictions secured by the HSE or COPFS (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service). 9% ended with a suspended sentence, while 3% imposed immediate custody."

Under British law, few pieces of legislation *specifically* address the needs of lone workers and employers' responsibilities towards them.

However, all employers have a duty of care to assure the safety and wellbeing of their workforce and ensure that lone workers are provided with the same standards of safety as their office-based colleagues.

Legislation that must be complied with includes the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), the [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#), the [Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007](#), and the [Health & Safety Offences Act 2008](#).

Failure to comply with health and safety legislation can have serious consequences for companies, leading to large fines, damage to the businesses' reputation and even imprisonment.

## Under this legislation, employers have a duty to:

### Conduct a lone worker risk assessment

Risk assessments are a basic legal requirement and in this case must be tailored to the specificities of lone working. When producing their risk assessment, employers need to take into consideration the hazards related to the tasks in question, the environments in which they are carried out and the members of the public that the lone worker may come into contact with.



A safety policy document needs to set out a framework for managing and minimizing risks faced by employees.

## Produce a written health and safety policy

Once your risk assessment has been carried out, it will be necessary to follow up with a safety policy that specifically applies to your lone workers. This should act as a guide to your company's policy when it comes to lone workers, as well as providing practical advice on safety and procedures to follow.

## Provide training specific to lone workers

Lack of training is often cited as a cause or aggravating factor for serious injuries in the workplace. Training is particularly important for lone workers, as working in isolation means that there are no colleagues around to intervene in the case of an incident or point out potential mistakes or unwise behaviour.



## Use lone worker devices to provide an appropriate level of supervision

We cannot stress this enough: lone working *must not* mean a complete lack of supervision.



With the Protector™ by Vatix a worker's movements can be monitored and logged, with a time-stamped audit trail – all in a way that's entirely GDPR compliant.

The greater the risk involved, the more closely you will need to monitor your remote or lone workers. While this used to mean regularly checking in by phone, [dedicated lone worker safety devices](#) are now available that enable workers to self-monitor their activity and trigger an alarm in case of danger, while managers remain aware of their whereabouts and keep track of their activity. Be sure to check that your chosen solution is GDPR-compliant.



Under UK legislation, your duty as an employer is to ensure that all your employees are provided with a safe working environment.

## Protecting Your Business' Lone Workers

Under UK legislation, your duty as an employer is to ensure that all your employees are provided with a safe working environment, whether they're remote or team-based.

In the case of lone workers, this means carefully evaluating the specificities of their working environment and implementing the specific measures mentioned above, to protect their wellbeing.

If you're unsure whether an employee within your organisation classifies as a lone worker, you can review the HSE's lone working advice page, or [get in touch with Vatrix to learn more.](#)

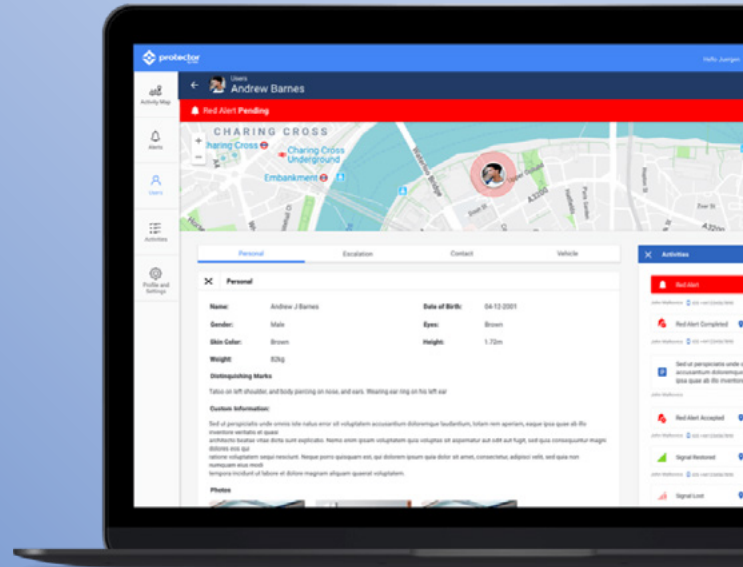




## About The Application

Protector by Vatrix is the future of lone worker safety solutions. An advanced incident management and reporting portal, Protector stores all the information you need to handle any safety concern, including employee location and personal details.

Receive and accept alerts through our state-of-the-art software to keep your employees safe today. Gain access to company-specific reports and time-stamped audit trails to keep your employees safe tomorrow.



## Protection That's Easy And Powerful

For superior technology and unrivalled support, choose Vatrix.

REQUEST A DEMO



30 Great Guildford Street  
London SE1 0HS  
call: +44 02039915555  
email: sales@vatix.com