



Managing Lone Worker Safety in Your Organisation

A step-by-step guide to identifying, understanding, and mitigating lone working risks.

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Are You Aware of Your Lone Working Needs?

In our market report, The State of UK Workplace Safety 2021, we asked respondents to rate their management's awareness of risks and hazards in the workplace.

Respondents gave an average score of 7.39 out of 10. This shows that most respondents are, at best, moderately confident their management understands the risks and hazards employees face in the workplace.

Investigating further, more than a quarter (27%) disagreed with the statement that their management understands workplace risks and hazards.

Furthermore, as professionals in the industry, it has not been uncommon for us to speak to a manager or business owner who confess they do not know the number of lone workers in their organisation. Some cannot even say with certainty whether they do or do not have lone workers.

These findings indicate that there is room for companies to improve their lone working awareness.

Why is Lone Working Awareness Important?

Without a clear picture of the lone working situation in their company, it's unlikely that employers will know to implement safety solutions that keep their lone workers safe.

This puts their lone workers in danger and places the company at risk of massive liabilities or fines for non-conformance.

About this Guide

This guide walks you through the steps you need to take to gain awareness in five key areas of lone working:

-  1 The employer's obligations towards lone workers.
-  2 The number of lone workers under your responsibility.
-  3 The exact hazards and risks your lone workers face.
-  4 What your lone workers need to stay safe.
-  5 The lone working safety solutions that meet their needs.

PART 1:

Awareness of Employer's Obligations towards Lone Workers

In general, you need to be familiar with the following legislation for health and safety in the workplace.

- 1 Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- 2 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- 3 Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- 4 Health & Safety Offences Act 2008



When it comes to lone working, these laws require you to:

- ✓ Provide and maintain a safe working environment, whether at a specific location or during transit, such as transportation.
- ✓ Provide health and safety training specific to lone workers.
- ✓ Ensure lone workers have adequate and reliable means of communication, such as with lone worker devices, so they can reach out for help at any time or so their team can reach out to them when needed.
- ✓ Conduct a lone worker risk assessment.
- ✓ Produce a written lone working policy, whether at a specific location or during transit, such as transportation.
- ✓ Be aware of the lone working conditions in their organisation.
- ✓ Understand the needs of all their lone workers to stay safe.
- ✓ Provide lone workers with the environment, processes, and equipment to stay as safe as possible in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

PART 2:

Awareness of the number of lone workers under your responsibility

It's important to be aware of the number of lone workers in their company to ensure adequate safety solutions for them. You also need clarity on how often your employees work alone and where.

Conducting a lone working survey will help you gain this awareness.

HOW TO CONDUCT A LONE WORKING SURVEY



Step 1

Inform your employees that you will be surveying to understand the state of lone working in the workplace. Make sure everyone understands the importance of completing this survey and provide them with a deadline to complete it.



Step 2

Decide on the method you will conduct the survey. You could use online survey tools, an internal digital system, or physical survey forms. We wouldn't recommend physical survey forms if you have more than 50 employees because manually compiling and analysing large volumes of data can be very time consuming and laborious.



Step 3

Create and distribute your survey using the following questions as a template. Customise or add any other questions specific to your industry.

1 Do you ever work alone?

Always
 Often
 Sometimes
 Rarely
 Never

2 Is there a possibility of finding people working alone in your working environment?

Often
 Sometimes
 Rarely
 Never

3 Have you ever felt uncomfortable while working alone?

Yes
 No

4 If you answered "Yes" to Question 3, briefly tell us why.

5 Do you work with machinery?

Always
 Often
 Sometimes
 Rarely
 Never

6 If you answered "Always / Often / Sometimes / Rarely" to Question 5, **briefly tell us what machinery you work.**

7 Do you work with hazardous biological or chemical materials?

Always
 Often
 Sometimes
 Rarely
 Never

8 If you answered "Always / Often / Sometimes / Rarely" to Question 6, **briefly tell us what hazardous materials you come into contact with.**

9 Do you work at night?

Always
 Often
 Sometimes
 Rarely
 Never

10 If you answered "Always / Often / Sometimes / Rarely" to Question 9, **are you usually working alone at night?**

Always
 Often
 Sometimes
 Rarely
 Never

11 Are you aware of any health issues that could affect you while working alone?

Yes
 No

12 If you answered "Yes" to Question 11, **please elaborate on your medical condition.**

13 Did you have any incident/near miss during the last 12/24 months?

Yes
 No

14 If you answered "Yes" to Question 13, **were you working alone at the time of the incident or near/miss?**

Yes
 No



Step 4

Once you have conducted the survey, analyse the data and take note of:

→ The number of employees who work alone.

→ How frequently they work alone.

→ The departments or work areas that have lone workers.

PART 3:

Awareness of the hazards and risks your lone workers face

Now that you've identified the lone workers in your organisation, how often they work alone, and where they work alone, the next step is to understand the unique risks and hazards they face.

To do this, you need to:

- 1 Conduct a lone working risk assessment.
- 2 Refer to your near misses and incident reports.

HOW TO CONDUCT A LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT



Step 1

Prepare a lone working risk assessment template. You can create this as a physical form or in a digital format which you can access from the site where you will be conducting the risk assessment.



Step 2

Conduct a site survey of the locations your lone workers work at to identify the hazards they face. Here is a list of common hazards to look out for:

Slips, trips, and falls	Working from height	Electrical	Violence or assault	Fire and explosions
Hazardous substances	Hazardous machinery	Medical	Access and travelling	Lifting and handling



Step 3

We also advise you to seek best practices for risk assessments specific to your industry.

HOW TO IDENTIFY HAZARDS FROM NEAR MISSES AND INCIDENTS REPORTS



Step 1

Refer to your near miss and incident report records for at least the past six months or more. If you don't currently have these records, please read this article to understand [why companies must implement an incident reporting system](#).



Step 2

Focus on the reports that happen during lone working and in the workplace areas where lone workers perform their duties. Take particular notice of any trends or incidents that reoccur due to the same hazard.

If you use a [digital reporting system](#), filtering the data to find trends by employee, location, or time span becomes much easier and faster than sifting through physical reports.



Step 3

If necessary, follow up with the employees involved with the near miss and incident reports. If corrective actions were implemented after they made the report, ask them how effective these corrective actions are. Do they feel safer? If they don't feel safer, ask them what they think they need to reduce the risk of these incidents reoccurring. Your frontline employees' opinion is valuable in helping to improve lone working safety.

PART 4:

Awareness of what your lone workers need to stay safe

By this stage, you have the information you need to create a risk management strategy.

A risk management strategy is essentially a cost-benefit analysis to help you set priorities and allocate resources to remove or lower the risks and hazards you've identified. Here's an outline of how to create one.

HOW TO CREATE A RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



Step 1

Evaluate each risk according to two factors:

→ The likelihood of an incident occurring due to this risk; and

- The impact that the risk can have on employee safety or company expenses should an incident occur due to the risk.

You can grade each risk using the following risk analysis matrix:

		IMPACT				
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Severe
LIKELIHOOD	Very Likely	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High	High
	Likely	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High
	Possible	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	Med Hi
	Unlikely	Low	Low Med	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi
	Very Unlikely	Low	Low	Low Med	Medium	Medium



Step 2

Control the risks by evaluating the type of risk management strategy to apply for each risk:

- Risk acceptance
- Risk transference
- Risk avoidance
- Risk reduction.

For the general workforce, risk acceptance can be applied to low-scoring (green) risks. This means you do not need to allocate resources or take actions to mitigate the risks. Typically, hazards categorised as medium risks or higher need to either be transferred, avoided, or reduced.

However, it is important to note that risks normally considered to be low-risk for the normal workforce should not be considered as low-risk for lone workers.

This is because **every risk becomes higher for lone workers** simply because they work alone. Therefore, we feel lone working hazards should at least get a medium risk (yellow) grade on the risk analysis matrix.



To understand this better, read this article: [Why You Need a Solution for Your “Low-Risk” Lone Workers](#)

PART 5:

Awareness of lone working safety solutions that meet their needs

For the hazards that require a risk reduction strategy, you'll need to select the appropriate solutions and best practices that will minimise the likelihood and/or impact of the risk.

In order to do this, you need to have awareness of the solutions currently available and their pros and cons. We recommend the following steps:

HOW TO CREATE A RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



Step 1

Research the common solutions available for your industry. Try not to limit yourself to online research. We recommend speaking to industry peers and attending the latest health and safety events in addition to online research.



Step 2

Create a shortlist of solutions according to three factors:

→ Impact on mitigating the risks.

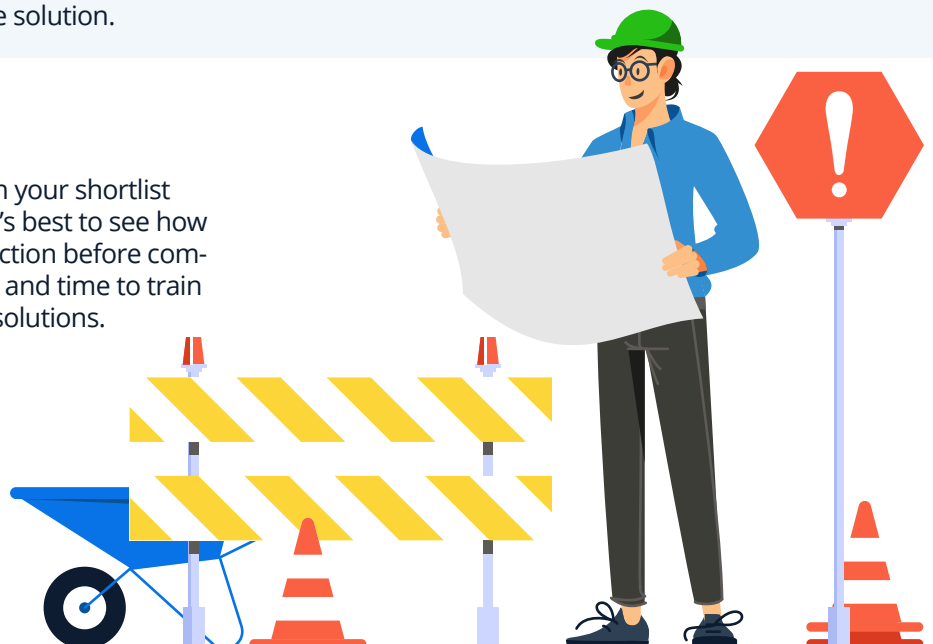
→ Your budget.

→ Quality of the solution.



Step 3

Contact the vendors on your shortlist and request a demo. It's best to see how the solution works in action before committing your resources and time to train employees to use the solutions.



RESOURCES & NEXT STEPS

Here's a list of resources to help you implement the steps in this guide.

Part 1:

Awareness of Employer's Obligations towards Lone Workers

Click the following links to read each legislation in full.



[Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)



[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)



[Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007](#)



[Health and Safety \(Offences\) Act 2008 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Part 2:

Awareness of the number of lone workers under your responsibility



[Click to download a lone working survey template.](#)

Part 3:

Awareness of the hazards and risks your lone workers face



[Click to download a lone working risk assessment template.](#)



Streamline your near miss and incident reporting with [real-time digital incident reporting system by Vatix.](#)

Part 4:

Awareness of what your lone workers need to stay safe



[Read this article to learn more](#) about how to conduct a risk management strategy.

Part 5:
Awareness of lone working safety solutions that meet their needs

Explore the lone working safety solutions Vatrix offers which are trusted by hundreds of companies across the UK, including:



Protector by Vatrix:

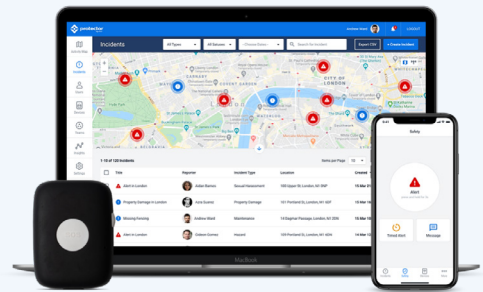
Employee-led lone working safety solutions.



LEARN MORE

Incident reporting by Vatrix:

Real-time near miss and incident reporting system.



LEARN MORE

Safe Pro:

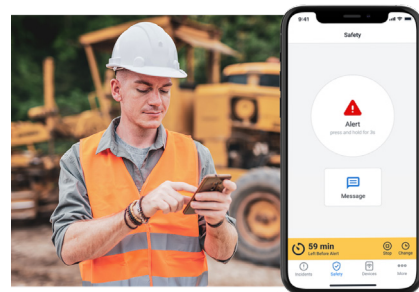
Industry-leading lone worker alarm device with two-way audio, GPS, fall detection, and all-day battery life.



LEARN MORE

Lone worker app by Vatrix:

The #1 trusted lone worker app accredited with BS8484: 2016.



LEARN MORE