



Lone Worker Safety and Monitoring Guide

Work related violence can happen in any industry. Employers have a duty of care to ensure lone worker safety.

A lone worker's safety should be a high priority for an organisation and each business must ensure they have a clear lone worker safety policy and guidelines for their staff to follow.

Who is a Lone Worker?

A lone worker is anyone who works in isolation or is located in a work environment by themselves. This can include people who are visiting people's homes, home carers, social workers, doctors, or even pathologists.

If an accident or emergency situation were to occur, lone workers can be isolated from help and assistance.

Both employees and employers should be proactive and take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure lone worker health and safety are taken.

Lone Worker's Safety and Health Tools

One of the ways a lone worker can protect themselves before a home visit is by conducting a Risk Assessment Evaluation. By conducting this evaluation in every new environment ensures that staff working in home/community settings are safe and potential risks are mitigated as much as possible prior to meeting any new clientele.

For the safety of all lone workers it is incredibly crucial that all new clients be carefully screened prior to commencement with a home/community based service to determine risks to both the staff and or the client.

If the lone worker is a healthcare professional reviewing the clients' medical record prior to the first face to face meeting will ensure that any potential risk factors are explored thoroughly during this screening process.

The Risk Assessment review should also include, but not be limited to:

- Reviewing the 'high risks accommodations' list.
- Understanding any known history of aggression or criminal history.
- Understanding of any substance abuse.
- Understanding of any known emotional or psychological concerns.
- Being aware of any identified hoarding /squalor issues.



When visiting a client in their home or community a lone worker may need to contact the client to confirm arrangements prior to leaving for the visit, this would also mitigate potential risks or concerns.

It is also important that staff members make every effort to be on time for scheduled visits and notify the client where possible if they become aware that they will be late or require the scheduled time to be revised.

It is also crucial that all staff who undertake home community visits **MUST** have access to a mobile telephone.

Professional conduct at all times within the workplace

Staff members should constantly be aware of their actions in relation to their own safety while on home/community visits including:

- Dress and modify behaviour appropriately for the environment.
- Avoid physical contact wherever appropriate.
- Be aware of the location of doors and exits.
- Minimise home / community visits after dark.
- Consider safety when parking: avoid parking away from the client's house or in isolated or poorly lit areas.
- Always lock the car, valuable should be out of sight, as should any papers or other item with identifying information on them.
- Retain car keys, wallet, duress alarm and mobile phone on your person.
- Listen for any conflict that may be occurring on the premises prior to entering.

Lone worker Safety De-escalation Strategies

Staff should generally refrain from accepting the offer of food and beverages when undertaking a home/community visit.

Staff members should employ additional strategies to increase safety where initial risk assessment has identified a potential risk or to clients where a risk have been previously identified.

Should a client or other person in the environment exhibit aggressive behaviours or a staff member feels unsafe or threatened during a home visit, the staff member should take steps calmly to remove themselves from the environment. Once they're in a safe place contact the Director.