

Four Steps to Protect your Lone Workers

'Out of sight out of mind' used to be the mantra for lone workers, but as the number increases, employers realise it's important to ensure safety and wellbeing

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- According to Government statistics, working alone is a daily occurrence for almost 6 million people in the UK. Many of us may have employees that classify as lone workers – in fact, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) identifies lone workers as those that work by themselves without close or direct supervision from others.



Lone workers can be working in any industry -from housing, including estate agents, housing associations, social & health, homeworkers, transport& logistics, construction and out of hours work, (security people or cleaners). This covers a wide range of sectors and regardless of which your company is in, anyone that is working alone is at risk. Failure to protect them could result in serious harm to them – and to the reputation of your company.

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*Nick Whiteley, CEO, HFX
workforce management
solutions*

The risks of working alone

All employers have a duty of care to employees as lone workers, which means ensuring that they take responsibility to provide ways to ensure health and safety. There are other benefits that employers who take their responsibility seriously can gain – employees who feel looked after and valued by their employers are more likely to feel more engaged and productive.

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key element. We've put the following four steps as a guide;

1. Identify what types of lone workers you employ

While there are many industries that employ lone workers, we have identified three categories: public-facing, mobile and fixed-site. Once you have assessed your workforce against these types it makes it much easier to work out what sort of protection they require - whether it requires regular calling in, personal alarms or special equipment – or a combination of all three.

2. Implement a lone working policy

Having a lone working policy means that you can provide a practical guide that employees can apply to their roles. It's not a legal requirement, but an effective policy can help to promote a

strong safety culture amongst your employees, keeping them safe and reducing the risk of potential legal issues.

Your lone working policy should be accessible and easy to understand and you should ensure that workers are familiar with it. Issuing a copy to new employees who will work alone or to any contractors or temporary workers is a good way to start.

3. Carry out lone worker training

Training is vital to ensure understanding of the risks, consequences and practical elements to ensure lone worker safety. While providing a copy of the policy to new employees shows due diligence, often training is what makes the difference to understanding and engagement. Early training is a worthwhile investment and might include tips on actions and behaviour - for example; making sure someone knows where they are, being cautious, or sharing incidents for future learning.

4. Implement systems to manage your workforce

A Time and Attendance (T&A) system can provide real time visibility of the entire workforce's attendance and location anytime, anywhere. It enables a company to record staff attendance by collecting data in a number of ways, so you always know who's in and who's out.

They range from the traditional clock on the wall that uses cards, tokens or biometrics, to apps that employees can download to their mobile devices, online apps, even dialling in by telephone. 'Zoning' can also help, so you can see exactly who is working in which department or area of the building at any time – especially out of normal working hours. The tracking facility within a T&A system also helps to protect lone workers from a health and safety aspect. It can alert managers if staff do not turn up in the event of an incident, to direct help quickly to the right location, whether that is extra staff or the emergency services.

It's important for the morale of your team and the effectiveness of any department to ensure your lone workers are as much a part of the business as everyone else. As well as knowing where they are, and the hours that they are working, it's vital to get them to check in regularly and meet up with colleagues so that they feel part of the team. Lone working should not mean working alone.

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