



Lone Working Policy and Procedure

April 2022

History of Changes

Version	Description of Change	Authored by	Date
1.1	New policy and Procedure	K Drum	20/07/16
2.1	Complete review of policy & procedure	K Fitzgerald	08/04/2022

Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

Borders College will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees and self-employed contractors who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety. Measures will also be adopted to protect anyone else affected by solitary working.

The Lone Working Policy and Procedures together with staff development and training is intended to enable staff to recognise particular risks associated with unaccompanied working and ensure that safety precautions and emergency procedures are understood. It will also assist staff to identify and respond correctly to hazards arising during lone working situations.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Increase staff awareness of lone working and to set out the process for ensuring the safety of staff working alone. Working alone is not in itself against the law, and it will often be safe to do so.
- Ensure that we consider carefully any health and safety risks for people working alone, and address any risks identified. Which will identified by completing a bespoke risk assessment, as and when required.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to employees who, in the course of their work, from time-to-time work in areas of isolation from other workers. It may include work on and off site. Lone working does not include being the only member of staff in an office when others are present in the building. The procedure does not cover staff travelling on ad-hoc business trips home or abroad.
- 2.2 Also excluded is work carried out by contractors and service providers arranged by Estates and managers directly. The College has a responsibility for the health and safety of any contractors doing work for them. Estates and relevant managers will be responsible for covering any lone working relating to contractors' work.

3. Key Principles

- 3.1 The Health and Safety Executive define a lone worker as:
'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'
- 3.2 The College will ensure that all activities that come within the definition of 'lone working' will be suitably risk assessed, and appropriate control measures put in place once a bespoke risk assessment has been produced.

- 3.3 The College will ensure that there are the organisational structure, defined roles and responsibilities, communication links and support in place to help lone workers if they need assistance.
- 3.4 The College will identify those with responsibility for the safe management of lone workers.
- 3.5 Procedures are in place to report, record and investigate any incidents that occur as a result of lone working.
- 3.6 The College will ensure that staff engaging in lone working will have the appropriate training, information and procedures to allow them to carry out their activities in a safe manner
- 3.7 Staff who are defined as 'lone workers' must inform their line manager of any incidents, including threatening behaviour, that occur whilst they are carrying out their duties.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Health and Safety Committee have the responsibility for approving this Policy.
- 4.2 The Health and Safety Manager has responsibility for:
- updating this policy in line with current legislation and best practice
 - giving advice and guidance to managers and staff around lone working
 - Investigate, where appropriate, any incidents in connection with lone working
- 4.3 Managers have a responsibility to:
- ensure lone working is covered by departmental risk assessments.
 - ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are implemented and disseminated to lone working staff for whom they are responsible
 - ensure that individuals involved in lone working have the appropriate information, instruction and training
 - carry out regular reviews of arrangements to ensure that all measures are effective and continue to meet the requirements of the lone worker.
- 4.4 All staff have a responsibility to:
- abide by the Key Principles of this Policy
 - take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety and that of others
 - report to their line manager any accidents, incidents or near misses that occur while working alone
 - advise their line manager of any health conditions that may increase the risk from working alone

5. Related Documents

5.1 Health and Safety Procedures Manual

5.2 Violence and Aggression at Work Procedure

5.3 Related legislation and Approved Guidance

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
Working Alone – HSE Guidance not INDG73

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more regularly if required.

Lone Working Procedure

1. Lone Workers

1.1 Definition

Lone Working is the term given to employees, contractors, and service providers, self-employed etc. who throughout the course of their work, at times work in areas of isolation from other workers. This type of work may include on and off-site work. Lone Working does not include being the only class tutor on a given premises or working in a single - occupancy office when others are present in the building.

1.2 Authorised Lone Working

The following circumstances are considered as examples of authorised lone working; these activities will be risk assessed by the appropriate person, as part of the College Risk Management procedures:

- Facilities team members or other staff opening up and closing premises
- Key-holders called out to investigate alarm activations
- Staff travelling between College premises or on College business during working hours
- Staff arranging or monitoring work placements
- Staff carrying out student or candidate interview/assessments
- Staff carrying out mentoring visits
- Contractors, suppliers, consultants, public service workers and others not employed by the College but working on-site alone

1.3 Unauthorised Lone Working

- Working at Height
- Work on fixed electrical supply
- Confined Spaces
- Hot Works
- Moving / carrying of large, heavy or awkward loads
- Any activity not covered by the College risk assessment procedures

2. Risk Assessment

Lone working is not in itself against the law, and it will often be safe to do so. However, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, put a duty on employers to consider carefully any health and safety risks arising from lone working and put control measures in place to avoid or reduce these risks.

All risk assessments will be undertaken by the Departments involved and forwarded to the H&S Manager for checking and recording in the shared area. All Departments should consider "lone working" when reviewing and assessing risk.

Risk assessment shall help decide the appropriate level of supervision or additional controls required for reducing risk to lone workers. When risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, the College will either cancel the work or arrange for appropriate supervision/support.

2.1 Identify Hazards

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. (This may require additional risk-control measures.) Precautions will take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

When lone working takes place, you should consider the following:

- does the workplace or environment present a specific risk to the lone worker?
- is there a safe way in and a way out for one person?
- can one person safely handle all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work?
- is there a risk of violence from students or members of the public? (See Violence and Aggression at Work Procedures – available on website)
- potential communication problems and how will the person be able to get help in an emergency?
- is the person medically fit to work alone?

2.2 Risk Control Measures

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. However, managers can ensure that employees understand the risks associated with working alone and the relevant control measures/precautions in place. Examples of control measures/precautions are as follows:

- Colleagues/ managers periodically visiting and observing staff working alone;
- where applicable, regular contact between the lone worker and Line Manager using either a telephone or e-mail;
- Ensure a fully charged mobile phones is available for contact purposes
- Where applicable, devices designed to sound an alarm in the event of an emergency, and which are operated manually; e.g. personal alarms
- Checks that a lone worker has returned to their normal place of work once they have completed their task.
- Keeping an up to date, current diary of visits and scheduled events with contact names and numbers; and provide access to this for the Dept. at all times, e.g. outlook calendar.
- Ensure any changes to appointment schedules are recorded to reflect an accurate schedule for each day.
- If on another premises staff should ensure they follow any sign in procedure in operation.

3. Lone Working Procedures

- 3.1** Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, the College is committed to ensuring their health and safety at work. Supervision can help to ensure that staff understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. Line Managers can also provide guidance in situations of uncertainty.
- 3.2** Information about emergency procedures and danger areas must be given to lone workers (e.g. contractors) who visit any of the Colleges campuses.
- 3.3** Staff working on premises where there are no other persons present should; avoid, so far as is reasonably practicable any hazardous activities; they should work close to a telephone with a direct outside line; inform a reliable member of the family, friend or colleague of their location and expected time of departure; inform such person of their actual departure; instruct such person of action to take if confirmation of safe return is not received e.g.; contact a College keyholder or the Emergency Services.
- 3.4** All incidents/accidents and instances of threatening behaviour, that occur when a staff member is lone working, must be reported to H&S Manager using the appropriate forms, which are all located on the staff Intranet.
- 3.5** All lone working activity must be risk assessed as part of the departmental risk assessment and any activity not included must be assessed separately prior to visit. The H&S Manager can advise or assist if required.
- 3.6** Some lone working activities such as candidate interviews, work placement visits, student mentoring or assessments may make an employee feel they are at risk due to threatening behaviour and that they should terminate the visit. If this is the case, then the following guidelines should be followed:
- If you feel it is safe to do so and will not make the situation worse, tell the person that their behaviour is not acceptable and if they continue, the appointment will be terminated
 - If you feel that it would make the situation worse by indicating they are going to leave, then offer another reason to go such as:
 - You need to collect something from the car
 - You need to take an urgent call
- 3.7** Staff will be required to follow the safe working procedures which will include the provision of first aid, communication procedures and awareness of emergency procedures. All employees are required to co-operate with these procedures to ensure safe working and to report any concerns to line manager
- 3.8** When working in other premises, staff must ensure the follow the sign in/out procedures in operation

4. Monitoring

Procedures must be put in place to monitor lone workers as effective means of communication are essential. This may include:

- Maintaining a log of visits and noting any significant issues
- Implementing a system to ensure lone workers have left an appointment or lone working activity
- Risk assessments reviewed regularly to ensure control measures are effective
- Periodic contact made with lone workers by College to check progress, this would be proportional to the risk level of the activity

5. Information and Training

- 5.1** Employees and others involved in lone working will be given all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved in lone working.
- 5.2** Appropriate training should be determined when reviewing the departmental risk assessment, as a result of an incident investigation or as part of the staff performance and development review
- 5.3** Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision in order to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. It may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations, and lone workers, therefore, need to understand fully the risks involved in the work, the necessary precautions and be sufficiently experienced. Managers should, therefore, establish clear procedures to set limits as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone, and, where appropriate, when to stop the work and seek advice.

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