

# HOOE PARISH COUNCIL

## HOOE PARISH COUNCIL LONE WORKING POLICY

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## **1. Introduction**

Hooe Parish Council recognises that the clerk is required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close direct supervision. Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Work Regulations 1999, Hooe Parish Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

## **2. The Scope of this Policy**

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities carried out on behalf of Hooe Parish Council.

## **3. Aims of this Policy and Procedure**

The parish council recognises there is a need for the clerk to work alone and the parish council has a duty to manage the welfare and wellbeing of any of its employees. This will include:

- Raising awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working
- Identifying and assessing potential risks to an individual working alone
- Explaining the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk,
- Providing appropriate support to lone workers
- To encourage the reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

The parish council will protect an employee from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the parish council's policy is to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

## **4. Definition**

The Health & Safety Executive defines lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision" such as:

- A caretaker who opens and closes a hall either early in the morning or late at night
- A groundsman tending to green space
- Office workers who work alone in the premises
- Homeworkers

Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces is not permitted to work on their own.

## **5. Responsibilities**

The parish council has a responsibility for the health and safety of their employees. The key responsibilities are as follows:

The Clerk or Parish Council shall:

- Try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable
- Ensure that the employee is competent to work alone
- Ensure that all lone working activities must be formally risk assessed. This should identify the risk to lone workers; any control measures necessary to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures
- Make sure all arrangements for lone working must be made clear to an employee and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone explained
- Ensure a lone employee is informed of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place.
- For the chairman to hold emergency contact numbers for the employee
- Raise the alarm if an employee cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated
- Ensure that an employee is made aware of this lone working policy, procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working

### Lone workers

- To take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work
- To follow any guidance and procedures designed for safe working
- Raise with the chairman any concerns they have in relation to lone working
- Not to work alone where there is adequate information to undertake a risk assessment
- Inform the chairman at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone

## **6. Risk Assessments**

The clerk shall complete (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity and updated as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to the chairman.

An employee who works alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness or an accident
- Incident due to faulty equipment
- Travelling alone
- Working in remote locations
- Abuse from members of the public or other third parties
- Incident of assault
- Animal attacks

## 7. **Ways in which Lone Working Risks can be Reduced**

Below are some example strategies that could be implemented (on their own or combined):

- Electronic (or hard copy) diaries to be kept up to date with meetings / visits / lone working details
- Keeping a mobile phone on you at all times
- Keeping the door locked in parish council premises
- To agree times and method of contact during the day
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's next of kin
- Agreeing a 'code word' with an emergency contact which can be used if the lone worker needs assistance
- Note: All these details must be kept securely in line with data protection legislation

If the employee changes their personal contact details, the employee must notify the chairman.

Details must be recorded that include:

- where you are going and time of arrival (address or area if there is no address)
- details of the purpose (i.e., undertaking inspections at the village hall, meeting a contractor etc.)
- contact details of anyone you intend to meet (any additional contact details for the location you are visiting)
- your mode of transport
- when you are expected to return

## 8. **Health and Wellbeing**

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with your chairman. This includes pregnancy. You can then jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with your confidentiality of the utmost importance.

## 9. Reporting Incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. The report should include:

- A brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved,
- For any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all the details of the incident and of the perpetrator should they be captured, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence
- In either instance, this might also include recording details of any circumstances you think might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances. This information would then support us to review our risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

If the employee should feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured, the employee must call the emergency services if immediate assistance is required. If possible, the employee should call your chairman to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

Always call your chairman if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.