



St Dennis Parish Council Lone Working Policy

Introduction

St Dennis Parish Council recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves in the community for significant periods of time, without close or direct supervision, in isolated areas and out of hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working.

The Parish Council has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999. St Dennis Parish Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risks 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.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the Parish Council's employees.

Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- Ensure the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way.
- Ensure safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety and working alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

Responsibilities

Councillors and the Clerk:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working.
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice.
- Ensuring there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of this policy.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident: and
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

Employees:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
- Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working.
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance.
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

Good Practice for lone working

- Carry a mobile phone with you
- Do not put yourself at undue risk and discuss any concerns with the clerk or Chairman.
- During working hours, all staff should advise the office of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back.
- If working outside of normal office hours, all staff should advise the Clerk of the estimated time of start and finish and contact the office once they have left the workplace.
- An “out of normal working hours” phone number for the Chairman will be issued to any member of staff working alone during such a period.
- If, in the course of working away from the workplace, plans change significantly this should be communicated back to the Clerk or chairman.
- If a job is assessed to have a sufficient risk, arrangements should be made with the officer or Clerk to check that a lone worker has returned. If possible, delay the visit until two members of staff can attend.
- Telephone contact between a lone worker and the Chairman or Clerk may also be advisable. Staff should avoid being left on their own with a client in their workplace, or leaving a colleague in this situation
- Lone workers should have access to first aid kits suitable for treating minor injuries.
- Lone workers should be provided with personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- Occasionally a risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.
- Before making a site visit, lone workers must have full knowledge of the hazards, and risk to which they may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce the potential risks.
- Office based staff must keep the office door locked and confirm identity before allowing visitors access.
- Council has agreed that the office-based staff will be available to the public and councillors during the office opening hours (Monday to Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm) on a ‘drop-in basis’ to carry out Council business. During this period a lone worker shall have access to the means of summoning emergency assistance by phone.
- All lone workers will notify the office in the first instance or the Chairman to inform when starting and leaving work.
- If working in remote locations workers are to inform the office where the location is, when they leave and when they return, if the office is not an available option then contact should be made with the Chairman.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is essential to good risk management.

Assessment will be carried out for and by all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff that are site based but work in isolation as well as mobile staff whose work takes them out into the community. Recommendations will be made to eliminate or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

A lone workers checklist will be completed (See Appendix 1). This will be used as a tool to identify if the existing control measures are adequate and if not, what modifications or additional actions can be considered necessary to help reduce the risks associated with lone working.

Once the check list has been completed a risk assessment will be carried out and documented as a risk assessment form.

Risk assessments:

- Risk of violence and aggression
- Isolated areas
- Sudden Illness
- Safety of equipment for individual use
- channels of communication in an emergency
- Travelling between sites
- Reporting and recording arrangements
- Communication and traceability
- Personal safety/security

This list is not exhaustive and other risks may be identified during the assessment process.

Following completion of the Risk Assessment, consideration will be given to any appropriate action that is required.

Incident reporting

An incident is defined as “an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage”.

In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or ‘unsafe’ (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

Contacting / involving the police

The Council is committed to protecting staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the council throughout the process. Except in cases of emergency, employees should inform the clerk of any incident immediately. The clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report details of the incident.

Support for staff

Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk, or unsafe. Staff should also recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The clerk will ensure that lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

Immediate support following a violent incident

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours the Chairman of the Parish Council should be contacted.

The clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. The clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

**Appendix 1
Lone Working Checklist**

Checklist completed by:

Date completed:

Location

Main issues of concern:

- Do you work alone?
- Do you work outside normal office hours?
- Do you meet with members of the public in an isolated location?
- Is there enough security provision?
- Is there safe access to the building?
- Does the activity involve working in confined spaces?
- Does the activity involve handling dangerous substances?
- Do you carry out work in high-risk locations (i.e. areas with high crime rates)?
- Do you carry out work in isolated areas?

Control measures for consideration:

- Do you provide joint working for high risk activities (i.e. in confined spaces and with dangerous substances)?
- Do you carry out regular supervisor or colleague checks during activities?
- Is there security lighting around access points and parking areas?
- Do staff have information and training on basic personal safety?
- Are staff trained in strategies for preventing and managing violence?
- Do staff have access to forms for reporting incidents or near misses and appreciate the need for this procedure?
- Do you provide accompanied visits when there are concerns about safety?
- Are there systems for monitoring staff whereabouts and movements for regularly reporting to base?
- Do staff carry mobile phones?

Are the existing control measures adequate? Yes / No

If “no” what modifications or additional actions are necessary?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Adopted by St Dennis Parish Council

16th March 2018

Minute Ref: F76/17

Reviewed 28th November 2019 Minute Ref: F56/19