

Client: Aware360

Blog: Guide to Lone Worker Safety Policy: Ensuring Safety in the Workplace

Date: June 2023

Outline:  lone worker safety policy

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Guide to lone worker safety policy: Ensuring safety in the workplace

In a world where the modern workplace is evolving at such a rapid pace, ensuring the safety and well-being of workers is becoming more and more of a challenge. Lone worker safety, in particular, requires attention due to the unique set of risks and hazards that they are exposed to.

According to data provided by the [International Data Corporation](#), it is estimated that the number of mobile workers in the United States will increase from 78.5 million in 2020 to 93.5 million in 2024. This staggering number underlines the importance of specific lone worker safety measures.

Ensuring the safety of your employees isn't just a moral obligation; it's a legal one! Under the federal [Occupational Safety and Health Act \(OSHA\)](#), employers are actually mandated to provide safe working conditions for their employees. Furthermore, many states have implemented their own [individual workplace safety guidelines](#), placing even greater emphasis on employers' obligations to ensure the well-being of their employees.

Ensuring the safety of lone and at-risk workers requires consideration of various factors, making it crucial to adopt a proactive stance in order to prevent incidents. Our comprehensive guide aims to shed light on the significance of implementing a robust lone worker safety policy and provides valuable insights into crafting an effective framework. By implementing a strong lone worker safety policy, you can fulfill your duty of care towards employees who work alone, in isolated environments.

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Understanding lone worker safety policy

A lone worker safety policy is a crucial component of an organization's commitment to safeguarding the well-being of employees who work alone or in isolated environments. It serves as a blueprint for employers to:

- Identify hazards
- Assess risks
- Implement appropriate controls.

By establishing these clear guidelines and protocols, you can protect your lone workers from harm and demonstrate your commitment to employee welfare.

When it comes to worker safety, [OSHA laws](#) regarding working alone include important regulations that you must adhere to when creating your lone worker policy. These regulations are also designed to promote a safe working environment.

According to [OSHA 1915.84](#), when an employee is working alone in a confined space or isolated location, **you must ensure the employee's safety and health**. This involves accounting for each employee throughout the work shift at regular intervals and at the end of the job assignment or workshift, using sight or verbal communication.

Furthermore, [OSHA Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#), also known as the [General Duty Clause](#), requires you to **provide employment and a workplace free from recognized hazards that could cause death or serious physical harm to employees**. As an employer, it is essential for you to adhere to a variety of occupational safety and health standards that have been established under these Acts. By doing so, you can effectively minimize the risks encountered by your workers.

The risks faced by lone workers

Whether operating in remote areas, during unconventional hours, or within isolated settings, lone workers can encounter various environmental, social, and physical hazards that demand attention and preparation. These potential risks and challenges are often difficult to solve, as traditional forms of safety and security can be inefficient. Some potential hazards include:

- **Limited access to support and assistance:** Unlike workers who operate in teams or groups, lone workers may find themselves isolated and without immediate help if they encounter a dangerous situation or suffer an injury. This can lead to delays in receiving aid, potentially exacerbating the severity of the situation.
- **Reduced visibility and communication with colleagues:** This isolation can pose several challenges. For example, without regular interactions with others, lone workers may not receive timely updates on safety protocols, changes in work procedures, or important information related to their tasks. This lack of communication can increase the

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likelihood of accidents or mistakes due to a lack of awareness of current conditions or necessary precautions.

- **Inability to raise an alarm in an emergency situation:** Workers may not have immediate access to communication devices or may face limitations in their ability to use them effectively. This delay in alerting others about a potentially hazardous situation can increase the risks to the lone worker's safety and well-being.
- **Limited access to training and development opportunities:** [Training programs](#) and resources are often designed for larger groups, and as a result, lone workers may not receive specialized training relevant to their specific tasks and environments. Thus increasing their vulnerability to hazards and hinder their professional growth.
- **Increased likelihood of fatigue and burnout:** The absence of social interaction and support can also contribute to feelings of isolation and stress, further increasing the risk of fatigue and burnout. In fact, [research by the National Safety Council](#) shows that 13% of workplace injuries can be attributed to fatigue.

Real-life incidents serve as stark reminders of the risks lone workers face.

- In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported almost [two million work-related deaths](#) worldwide
- According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the United States recorded 5,190 work-related fatalities in 2021
- An alarming number of 2.6 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses are reported annually in the US

There are countless statistics just like this that highlight the critical importance of implementing a robust lone worker safety policy to mitigate risks and provide adequate support and protection to those working alone.

Key elements of a lone worker safety policy

To ensure effectiveness and compliance, it is crucial to tailor your organization's lone worker policy to its unique requirements, legal obligations, and the mitigation of specific risks associated with lone working.

Nevertheless, regardless of the industry, several fundamental components should be incorporated into every organization's safety policies. These elements address various aspects of safety management and provide a clear framework for you and lone workers alike.

1. **Policy purpose statement:** Explain how the measures will ensure the safety of lone workers and how the policy reflects your organization's objectives and values. This

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statement aims to foster employee involvement, thereby nurturing a culture that prioritizes safety.

2. **Identify all lone worker roles:** Identify all employees who frequently work alone. This category encompasses various roles, including delivery drivers, home healthcare workers, utility maintenance staff, social workers, etc.
3. **Risk assessment:** Conduct a thorough assessment of the hazards and risks specific to lone working situations. Identify potential dangers, such as violence, accidents, medical emergencies, and environmental factors.
4. **Roles and responsibilities:** The policy should define the roles and responsibilities of both employers and lone workers. It outlines the employer's duty to provide a safe working environment and the lone worker's responsibility to follow safety protocols and report any hazards or incidents promptly.
5. **Procedures and expectations:** Outline clear policies and procedures to address identified risks. Include guidelines for emergency response, incident reporting, and training requirements.
6. **Provide training and education:** Ensure that lone workers receive training on the policies, procedures, and safety protocols.

Clarity and simplicity are crucial when crafting your lone worker safety policy to ensure understanding and compliance. Using concise and accessible language, free from jargon, enhances comprehension among all employees, regardless of their background or expertise.

Creating a comprehensive lone worker safety policy from scratch can be time-consuming and challenging. To simplify the process, consider utilizing a ready-made template that covers all key elements.

Safety first: Essential solutions for protecting lone workers

Every year, a staggering number of [over 500 million nonfatal occupational injuries](#) and illnesses are reported, a significant portion of which could have been prevented. However, by adopting comprehensive safety solutions, you have the opportunity to mitigate the hazards workers face and prioritize their well-being.

Ensuring the safety of lone workers involves the adoption of technology and devices specifically designed for their protection. [Check out the Aware360 safety solutions](#) and find out how our lone worker technology effectively enhances overall safety measures, improves emergency visibility, and enables prompt responses from support personnel.

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Enhance your workplace safety

As we previously mentioned, establishing a safe work environment presents challenges. The numerous risks and potential hazards demand constant vigilance and proactive behavior. Nevertheless, by fostering a safety culture that incorporates comprehensive policies and the latest technology, you can ensure your workers receive the proper care and protection they deserve.

Take the first step towards safeguarding your lone workers with [Aware360](#). [Get in touch](#) today and find out how you can create a safer work environment for your employees.