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# LONE WORKING POLICY & PROCEDURES

TO:	Governance Sub-Committee
PREPARED BY:	Collette Anderson (CS & Innovation Manager)
SUBJECT:	Review of Lone Working Policy & Procedures
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APPROVED BY:	Linda Sichi (Deputy Chief Executive Officer)

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## **1. AIM OF THE POLICY**

This policy and the procedures (*Appendix 1*) it contains applies to all employees, Management Committee members, contractors, volunteers and workers.

Milnbank Housing Association (MHA) recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of individuals whilst working alone. The Association aims to limit lone working where reasonably practicable. Where lone working is necessary, MHA will take all reasonable steps in accordance with their duty of care as an employer to ensure the abovementioned individuals are safe whilst working in isolation.

In line with MHA's duty of care, a lone worker should not be put at any greater risk if they are lone working compared to someone who is not. MHA has a duty to assess lone working risks and take any reasonable, practical measures to reduce and where possible, eliminate these as much as possible. This will be done via the risk assessment process.

The Lone Working Policy and Procedures sets out the Association's approach in both identifying risks and adequately managing them. All employees, Management Committee members, contractors, volunteers and workers are expected to co-operate, and follow these measures, that will assist in keeping them safe.

## **2. DEFINITION**

For the purposes of this policy, the Health & Safety Executive describes a lone worker as:

*"Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision."*

Within MHA, a lone worker is likely to include the following:

- Working out with normal office hours, these are deemed to be from between 5pm and 8.30am, even on a one-off basis.
- Working with the public/residents on your own or away from colleagues (out of sight or earshot)
- Working on your own away from colleagues, in the office, at home or some other location.
- Working in a resident's home.
- Travelling alone as part of your job (this does not include commuting).
- Working in the reception area alone, or in another area isolated from the rest of the Association.
- Any other situation identified through the risk assessment process.

### **3. LEGISLATION**

Although there is no specific legal duty on employers or legislation that explicitly applies to lone workers, the undernoted legislation applies indirectly:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

The above legislation requires the Association to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees is not at risk. This is achieved by undertaking risk assessments and providing relevant training and information to employees on lone working with the view of reducing and, where possible, eliminating any risks identified as much as possible.

### **4. RISK ASSESSMENT/MANAGING RISKS**

Risk assessments should be recorded and reviewed, usually annually or when they become invalid for any reason. Findings from the risk assessment must also be communicated to the relevant person. The risk assessment will consider where the risk may be increased by the work activity itself, or by the lack of on-hand support should something go wrong and how the risk can be mitigated. Factors that will be assessed include (this list is not exhaustive):

- The remoteness of the workplace
- Potential communication problems
- The likelihood of a criminal attack
- Potential for verbal and physical abuse
- Consideration of lone workers' potential feelings of isolation, stress and depression
- Whether or not all equipment, materials, chemicals etc., can be handled safely by one person.
- Whether or not the person is medically fit and suitable to work alone
- How the lone worker will be supervised.
- How the lone worker will obtain help in an emergency such as an assault, vehicle breakdown, accident or fire.
- Whether or not there is adequate first-aid cover.
- If working at height is involved, both the work and the means of access will be assessed.
- Some lone working may require access to locations which are difficult to access or exit. Where this is the case, an assessment will consider whether this type of task is suitable to be carried out by only one person.

MHA will ensure those working alone are provided with adequate information, instruction, and training to understand the hazards/risks and the safe working procedures associated with working alone.

A formal risk assessment will take place prior to all known lone working situations. However, it is important for employees, Management Committee members, contractors, volunteers and workers to be aware and comfortable undertaking a risk assessment in any lone worker situation they find themselves in, and raise any issues immediately with their line manager.

## **5. UNACCEPTABLE LONE WORKING**

The following activities, although not exhaustive, should **not** be carried out by lone workers under any circumstances:

- Breaching Lifting & Handling of significant or heavy items
- Working at heights
- A visit alone to residents on the Associations 'Accompanied Visits' register
- Where any other Association Policy or Procedure prohibits staff from carrying out a duty as a lone worker

All lone workers are expected to cooperate fully with any instructions provided by the line manager. They are also expected to follow MHA's safe systems of work and any associated procedures. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

An element of common sense must always be applied when working alone and the individual must ensure they are not placing themselves at risk or in danger when undertaking duties as a lone worker.

## **6. EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

As an employer, MHA has a responsibility for ensuring all staff are safe whilst working for us and this includes any lone working situations.

To do this, MHA will:

- 1) Make sure risk assessments are carried out and reviewed annually or when required.
- 2) Provide procedures for working safely whilst lone working.
- 3) Make sure staff are provided with appropriate and relevant training to understand procedures.
- 4) Have reporting systems in place to record, investigate and review any near misses and incidents.
- 5) Involve staff when considering potential risks with lone working and reasonable control measures
- 6) Make sure staff are issued with a copy of this policy.
- 7) Review this policy and update it as is appropriate.

## **7. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employees' also have responsibilities, which MHA expect to be fulfilled. These are as follows:

- 1) Abide by the lone working procedures and speak to a manager if you

- are unsure of anything.
- 2) Not knowingly put yourself at risk.
  - 3) Remove yourself from any situation you do not feel comfortable and/or safe in.
  - 4) Report all lone working incidents and near misses, by following our reporting procedures.
  - 5) Attend training when this is provided.
  - 6) Take part in lone working risk assessment reviews.
  - 7) Whilst in a lone working situation carry out an informal/dynamic risk assessment.
  - 8) Know, understand and follow this policy and the procedures.
  - 9) Speak to your line manager if you are unsure of anything.
  - 10) Ensure your emergency contact person/next of kin information is updated in line with the Association's procedures.

## **8. TRAINING**

Where necessary, all lone workers will be fully trained in the safe working practices to be adopted in order to carry out their tasks safely. This will apply to employees and other workers where applicable with a specific emphasis on the more vulnerable employees (e.g. young people, pregnant women, employees with a known disability). The lone working arrangements forms part of new employee's induction.

## **9. NEAR MISS AND INCIDENT REPORTING**

It is vital for employees, Management Committee members, contractors, volunteers and workers to report any lone working near miss situations or incidents as soon as possible to the Health & Safety Officer or a member of the Management Team. If it is not possible to report immediately, it must be reported within 12 hours of occurring. On reporting the incident, the Health & Safety Officer and/or line manager must act in accordance with MHA's Policies and Procedures and an incident/accident form must be completed.

## **10. LINE MANAGERS**

It is the responsibility of individual line managers to monitor the tasks being carried out by their staff. In particular, they are responsible for ensuring that any tasks described in section 5 above are not carried out by only one person. If the nature of the tasks change in any way, the manager must ensure that a new risk assessment is carried out. They also need to ensure that any lone worker follows good working practices and safe systems of work.

## **11. MONITORING & REVIEW**

The Lone Working Policy shall be monitored and reviewed every two years or otherwise as deemed necessary by the Management Committee, or in line with legislation changes.

## **12. DATA PROTECTION**

MHA controls the personal information that we collect, this means that we are legally responsible for how we collect, hold and use personal information. It also means that we are required to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) when collecting, holding and using personal information.

**MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION**  
**LONE WORKING PROCEDURES**

MHA's lone working procedures apply where employees are required to carry out their duties unaccompanied. Should you require any further information, training or have any concerns over working alone you must notify your Line Manager.

MHA will assess the risks involved in lone working from any customer/client site or premises. We will look at the means of transport, communications, welfare facilities, emergency procedures and any other specific items concerning the health, safety and welfare of our employees.

MHA will record our findings and ensure persons working for us are aware of the risks and control measures which are applicable to their job role or the tasks they complete.

When working alone you must ensure that:

- You know the job and the risks involved.
- You are suitably experienced, informed of the risks and have the training and support you may need.
- When you go off site to work it is important to have a mobile phone to be able to keep in communication with MHA if necessary. This enables you to keep in touch with your colleagues who can be aware that you are safe, besides being able to summon assistance from colleagues, or the emergency services, should the need arise. Where necessary, MHA reserves the right to track the location of staff that have access to a company mobile.
- You know the workplace and area you are working in and be aware of how to leave the area safely or call for assistance in case of difficulty.
- You avoid personal danger to you and others who may be at risk.
- You do not escalate violence or threats. Walk away and summon assistance immediately. Contact your Line Manager and complete a report detailing the incident(s) when safe to do so. You must not put yourself or others at risk.
- You observe all security and safety precautions and instructions.
- You are alert to potential or actual risks and know what to do in the event of an emergency.
- You must inform your line manager (or HR) if you are leaving site (your place of work), for whatever reason, and update them immediately upon your return.
- All staff whose lone working activities occur off-site are provided with a personal first-aid kit (e.g. members of the In-house team). It is your responsibility to ensure that it remains adequately

stocked. Replacement contents can be obtained from the Health & Safety Officer. For those working or visiting the Association premises, the location of first aid kits is clearly displayed.

These procedures can vary due to changes in circumstances and/or legislation. Should you require any further information, training or have any concerns over working alone please speak to your Line Manager or HR.