



Safety and Security
Solutions

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Lone Worker Training

Overview

Are people legally allowed to work alone?

Yes. There is nothing specific in general legislation that prohibits a person from working alone. **Section 19 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005** requires the employer to undertake a risk assessment, and so this shall determine whether or not an employee may work alone.



Lone Worker

Duty of Care

What responsibilities do lone workers have?

The employer holds the main responsibility for protecting the safety and health of lone workers. Nonetheless, lone workers themselves have a responsibility to help their employer fulfil this duty, and so they must:

- Take reasonable care to look after their own safety and health
- Safeguard the safety and health of other people affected by their work
- Co-operate with their employer's safety and health procedures
- Use tools and other equipment properly, in accordance with any relevant safety instructions and training they have been given
- Not misuse equipment provided for their safety and health
- Report all accidents, injuries, near-misses and other dangerous occurrences



What provisions should be in place for lone workers in the case of an emergency?

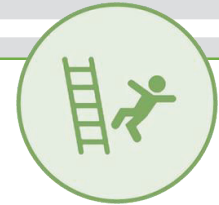
- Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events.
- Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them.
- Information about emergency procedures and danger areas should be given to lone workers who visit your premises.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.
- Occasionally, the risk assessment may indicate lone workers need training in first aid.

Hazards

What kind of hazards might lone workers be exposed to?

Hazards that lone workers may encounter include:

- accidents or emergencies arising out of the work, including inadequate provision of first aid
- sudden illnesses
- inadequate provision of rest, hygiene and welfare facilities
- physical violence from members of the public and/or intruders



Controls

If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or backup should be put in place.

What control measures could be implemented to minimise the risk to lone workers?

The risk assessment should prescribe control measures to be implemented in order to eliminate/minimise the identified risks. Such control measures may include:

- communication is very important: mobile phone, telephone or radio
- controlled periodic checks
- automatic warning devices, e.g. panic alarms, no movement alarms, automatic distress message systems, i.e. pre recorded message sent if not actively cancelled by operative, etc.
- instruction and training in proper procedures, e.g. code words for potentially violent situations when combined with mobile phone communication.
- use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- health surveillance
- implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)
- locking and securing place of work
- implementing correct incident reporting procedures
- provision of counselling
- first-aid kits and training





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Workplace Violence Training

Overview

Workplace violence occurs where people, in the course of their employment, are aggressively verbally abused, threatened or physically assaulted.

Every year, over 5% of all reported workplace accidents in Irish workplaces are due to violence.

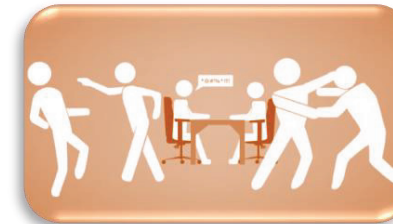
WHAT DOES THE LAW REQUIRE?

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2006 require employers to ensure the safety and health of employees. They require employers at each workplace to carry out risk assessments and prepare a Safety Statement by:

- finding out if there is a problem and how serious it is by:
 - identifying the hazards
 - assessing the risks to health and safety from violent acts and
 - putting in place appropriate safeguards



Safeguard



**WORKPLACE
VIOLENCE**

HOW TO ENSURE ADEQUATE SAFE GUARDS

Once you have identified that there is a potential for violence, you will most likely have identified the reasons for this. In turn this will allow you to select the most appropriate safeguards. Make sure that the preventive measure does not exacerbate the situation e.g. a safety screen that causes customers to raise their voice will also make them angry.

Preventative measures include:

- in situations of high risk for assault with knives, stab resistant vests should be worn under normal clothing;
- the installation of video surveillance and personal alarms and other emergency communication equipment can help deter attackers; the best system combines static panic buttons with personal alarms;
- isolated staff should be issued with beepers or with mobile phones. Emergency code phrases are also useful;
- cash free systems e.g. cheques, credit cards, tokens, etc. Time locked safes can prove useful where cash is held and signs signifying this should be posted;
- waiting rooms should have reading material or a television and an ordered system of queuing such as numbered tickets or expected waiting time displayed. They should also have signs from senior management stating that no level of violence will be tolerated and if violence occurs it will be reported to the Gardai;
- chairs should be of the continuous bent metal tube form rather than four "metal spikes" form.

As well as reporting the accident on-line through the Authority's website www.hsa.ie or by sending a completed Accident Report Form (IR1) to the Health and Safety Authority, all violent incidents should be recorded internally on a suitable form

Support

Training can be given in the recognition and avoidance of violent situations. Techniques of distraction and empathy as well as break away techniques and training in physical restraint can be used.

Conflict resolution and non-confrontational styles of approach can be taught to staff – keeping the palms open, using a calm voice, tilting one's head and shrugging the shoulders, always provide alternative means or routes of appeal to disappointed customers.

Warning signs that employees should be trained to recognise are fixed gaze rapid breathing, clenched fists, loud talking, restlessness or pacing which should alert them to possible violent intent of customers/clients.

Staff should be trained in the use of security measures and devices such as silent alarms or intercoms combined with coded phrases to alert colleagues. They should not try to resist if cash or goods are the obvious motive for the attack.