



Seaton Town Council Constitution

Chapter 21 Lone Working Policy

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SEATON TOWN COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Seaton Town Council ('the Council') recognises that its employees may be required to work by themselves for periods of time without close or direct supervision and out of normal office hours, in particular the Town Maintenance Officer. The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks of lone working.

The Council also recognises that it has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees.

POLICY STATEMENT

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

Definition of 'lone workers' - the Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". This covers all the Council's employees who are all, at times, required to carry out their duties for all or part of their working day working in isolation. This may be within the office or outside the office.

The aim of the policy is to:

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

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Town Clerk, on behalf of the Council, is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Town Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of this policy
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone
- Ensuring that staff are given appropriate information, instruction and training
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents

As outlined in the Staff Handbook, Chapter 4 of the Council's Constitution, employees are responsible for:

- 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 as appropriate
- 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

RISK ASSESSMENT

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 to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. A lone workers' checklist will be completed (See Appendix 1) and this will be used as the basis for a risk assessment. For site based lone workers, any risk assessment should also include information regarding:

- Safe access and exit.
- Risk of violence.
- Safety of equipment for individual use.
- Channels of communication in an emergency.
- Site security.
- Security arrangements i.e. alarm systems and mobile telephones.
- Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.

Risk assessments for mobile lone workers should, additionally, include information regarding:

- Travelling between sites.
- Reporting and recording arrangements.
- Communication and traceability.

- Personal safety/security.

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

MANDATORY PROCEDURES

To ensure the security of buildings, appropriate steps should be taken to control access to the building and to ensure that emergency exits are accessible. Alarm systems must be tested regularly. Staff who work alone must ensure that they are familiar with the exits and alarms. There must be access to a telephone and first aid equipment for staff working alone.

If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, a staff member must not enter alone, but must wait for back up from the emergency services.

To ensure personal safety, staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a backup plan is sufficient. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk. Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety.

Before working alone, assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the line manager. Staff must inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving details of their location and following an agreed plan. If a member of staff does not report as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate.

Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, to monitor and to counter the effect of working in isolation.

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 Town Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. All staff are provided with the Town Clerk’s contact details. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or “unsafe” are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

The Council is committed to protecting the 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 the cases of emergency, employees should inform the Town Clerk of any incident immediately. The Town Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

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 be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Town Clerk will ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive the appropriate training.

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Town Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours the Chairman should be contacted by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to any legal or insurance matters. The Town Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

POLICY REVIEW

Seaton Town Council is committed to reviewing its policies and making improvements where possible.

Adopted: 21 December 2020

Reviewed:

Policy Due for Review:

APPENDIX A: SEATON TOWN COUNCIL – LONE WORKING CHECKLIST

Checklist completed by:	
Date completed:	
Location:	

Areas of Concern:	<i>Please circle</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
Do staff work alone?	YES	NO	
Do staff work outside normal office hours?	YES	NO	
Do staff meet members of the public in isolated locations?	YES	NO	
Is there safe access to the building?	YES	NO	
Do staff carry out high-risk activities?	YES	NO	
Do staff work in isolated areas?	YES	NO	
Control Measures for Consideration:			
Is joint working provided for high risk activities?	YES	NO	
Are regular colleague checks carried out during the working day?	YES	NO	

Is there security lighting around entrance and exit doors and in parking areas?	YES	NO	
Do staff have information and training on basic personal safety?	YES	NO	
Are staff able to confidently implement strategies for minimising and preventing violence?	YES	NO	
Is there a buddy system for monitoring staff whereabouts when someone is lone working?	YES	NO	
Are staff aware of the need to report incidents and are they familiar with the system for doing this?	YES	NO	

Are the existing control measures adequate? YES NO

If no, what additional actions are required:

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