



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 Officers ('Officers') 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 Officers, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks of lone working and to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers in accordance with the Council's obligation under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers and all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the Council's Officers. It does not apply to Councillors.

Definition of 'lone workers' - the Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". Lone worker can also refer to staff who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples can include:

- A Council officer who arrives for work early in the morning or works late in the evening in order to undertake council business
- A Council officer carrying out maintenance work in one of the Council's playparks or other green spaces
- A Council officer working alone in the premises

Any worker under the age of 18 years, anyone working in a confined space, or anyone undertaking tasks associated with increased risk, is not permitted to work on their own.

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase Officers' and Councillors' 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 Officers in all areas that enables them to recognise potential risks and provide practical advice on safety, when working alone
- Ensure that appropriate support is available to Officers 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
- Ensuring that the worker is competent to work alone
- 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 Officers are aware of the policy and that arrangements for lone working are made clear to staff
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out where necessary 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 and that Officers have the opportunity to contribute to these.
- Ensuring that Officers are given appropriate information, instruction and training
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to Officers 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, Officers are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions
- Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working and any instruction given by their line manager and/or the Council
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate
- Informing the Town Clerk at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone
- 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
- Being aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine and prolonged periods where there is no communication

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. A risk assessment will be carried out for and by all Officers whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes Officers that are site based but work in isolation as well as mobile Officers 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. These steps can include:

1. Intruder alarm and fire alarms to be tested regularly
2. The Harbour Road door access code to be changed annually and to only be given to Officers, councillors and hirers of the function room.
3. Access to the seafront side of the building via the ramp to be restricted to Officers only. Councillors, contractors or visitors needing to access the TIC or Council offices via Harbour Road outside of opening hours can telephone ahead and be met by a member of Officers.
4. All staff to sign in and out of the building at all times.
5. 2 members of Officers to be in the office at any given time during opening hours. Where Officers have to work alone, they must ensure that they are familiar with the exits and alarms and that they have access to a telephone and first aid equipment.
6. If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, nobody must enter alone, but must wait for back up from the emergency services or another Officer.
7. To ensure personal safety, Officers 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. Officers should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety which can include keeping any internal doors locked at all times.
8. Whilst Officers should not work alone for extended periods or on a regular basis, there may be times when this is unavoidable. Before working alone, assessment

of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the line manager. Officers must inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone and confirm via the Whatsapp group that they have left the building. If an Officer does not report as expected, an appointed buddy should check initially via the Whatsapp group and alert the Town Clerk (or in their absence the Deputy Clerk) who will then respond as appropriate.

9. All Officers working offsite must inform a colleague and/or the Town Clerk where they will be working and when they expect to return to the building. Any delay must be communicated to the office.
10. All Officers must ensure that the Town Clerk holds up to date emergency contact details and contact details of their next of kin.
11. All Officers must share with the Town Clerk, any details of any aspects of their health that could lead to increased risk when lone working.

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 Officers are provided with the Town Clerk’s contact details. Officers 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 Officers from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All Officers 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, Officers 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.

Officers working for the Council should know that their safety is paramount and any safety concerns will be taken seriously. Officers should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk, or unsafe. Officers 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 regularly reviewing its policies and making improvements where possible.

Adopted: 2nd December 2024

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 Officers work alone?	YES	NO	
Do Officers work outside normal office hours?	YES	NO	
Do Officers meet members of the public in isolated locations?	YES	NO	
Is there safe access to the building?	YES	NO	
Do Officers carry out high-risk activities?	YES	NO	
Do Officers 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	

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Is there security lighting around entrance and exit doors and in parking areas?	YES	NO	
Do Officers have information and training on basic personal safety?	YES	NO	
Are Officers able to confidently implement strategies for minimising and preventing violence?	YES	NO	
Is there a buddy system for monitoring Officers whereabouts when someone is lone working?	YES	NO	
Are Officers 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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