

Policy Statement

KERRY COMMUNITY COUNCIL (KCC) takes the health and safety of its employees and councillors seriously. KCC has a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our employees and councillors while at work or carrying out council authorised activities. KCC realise that at any given time, staff or councillors may be working or engaged in council business alone, either in an home office or externally.

Aim and Scope

This policy is designed to alert employees and councillors to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is designed to give employees and councillors a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Lone Working Risk Assessment – via main KCC Risk Assessment
- Lone Working Procedure – Appendix 1

Related Legislation

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Context

KCC has a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and councillors while at work or engaged in council business. At any given time, employees or councillors may be alone, either in an home office or when operating on our behalf externally. KCC are responsible for assessing the risks to lone workers and taking steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. Employees and councillors have responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others in lone working situations. Lone working is not inherently unsafe. Taking precaution can reduce the risks associated with working alone. This policy is designed for employees and councillors who either frequently or occasionally work alone. It also refers to both high and low risk activities.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. For example:

- People working separately from others in a building
- People who work outside 'normal' hours
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues
- People who work at home other than in low risk, office-type work

The definition covers staff and councillors in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures.

Potential Hazards of Working Alone

People who work or volunteer alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur when there is no-one to call for help or first aid available
- Fire
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building for example, danger of being accidentally locked in
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone

Measures to reduce the risk of lone working.

To reduce the risk for people working alone we carry out a risk assessment of the following issues, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access.
- The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk.

- History – any previous incidents in similar situations.
- Any other special circumstances.

All available information should be considered, and risk assessments should be updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in each situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

In any situation where an employee or councillor is operating alone and feels unsafe, they must remove themselves from that situation immediately and report the incident to their line manager/Clerk and/or Chair/ Vice-Chair of the Council.

In any situation where an employee or councillor is operating alone and an incident occurs, this must be reported to their line manager/ Clerk and/or Chair/ Vice-Chair as soon as possible. An incident is any situation where the health and safety of the employee or volunteer is compromised and may include an accident, fire, violence, or threat of violence (this is not exhaustive).

Supervision

Lone workers are, by definition, not under constant supervision. KCC ensure that lone workers understand the risks associated with the work/task and the relevant safety precautions.

- Employees or councillors will be given training that covers lone working where appropriate.
- Employees or councillors new to a role where they may be lone working may need to be accompanied initially
- Regular contact by phone may be appropriate and we ensure that employees or councillors carrying out duties alone have a mobile phone available at all times to enable them to contact their allocated contact in the event of an emergency.

Accidents and Emergencies

- Employees and councillors operating alone should be made aware of the process for responding correctly to emergencies.
- Employees or councillors who are alone in the office must inform (insert the appropriate person) and are responsible for adhering to security and fire regulations.

Conclusion

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other staff or councillors, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors.

KCC ensures that measures are in place to reduce risk and that expectations have been communicated to employees and councillors operating alone and appropriate training provided.

All staff and councillors, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and should take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with carrying out their normal duties.

Appendix 1 KCC Lone Working Procedure

KCC has 2 part time employees and 13 Councillors as of May 24

Procedure

External Activities

The council will set up and provide the following as appropriate to the tasks being carried out*.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Employees and Councillors will be provided with the necessary PPE to protect themselves in case of an emergency or hazardous situation.

Periodic Check-ins: Employees and Councillors, on council authorised business, should check in at regular intervals to confirm their safety and well-being. This can be done manually via calls or texts, through automated systems like a lone worker smartphone app or via an approved reporting structure.

Emergency Procedures: The Council will provide clear instructions on what to do in an emergency and contacts for immediate assistance. Councillors attending Village Halls for meetings should make themselves aware of the emergency procedures in place at the relevant venues.

Training and Supervision: Proper training for lone workers on health and safety practices, as well as regular supervision to ensure these practices are followed.

Risk Assessment: Regular assessments to identify and mitigate risks associated with lone working – detailed in the Council's main Risk Assessment.

Monitoring: After-hours monitoring and overtime alerting to ensure workers are safe outside of regular working hours.

Hazard Reporting: Systems for employees and councillors to report any hazards or unsafe conditions they encounter.

Violence Prevention: Measures to protect lone workers from work-related violence, such as aggression.

Councillor activities – the Council recommends that councillors, where possible, do not carry out authorised activities/ duties alone i.e. Cemetery Inspection is carried out by 2 Councillors or Councillor and Clerk.

Working at Height

Under no circumstances should an employee/ councillor work at height as a lone worker. Working at height should only be undertaken by accredited, trained personnel and on an accompanied basis.

*Note due to the limited outside activities/duties not all the above processes will be required, and each activity will be assessed on an individual basis.

Internal Activities – Home Office Working

The Council does not recommend Councillors/ employees invite members of the public to their home to discuss council business. Members of the public wishing to address the Council should contact the Clerk, in writing, and arrange to attend a Council Meeting and/or arrange to meet at a neutral venue for any review of Council documentation – as required by legislation.

Training courses are provided for home office working, as follows:

- Homeworker Awareness
- Display Screen Equipment

Via <https://riskacademy.hiscox.co.uk>