



Rainbow Horses

Learning Centre CIC

Rainbow Horses Lone Worker Policy and Procedures

What is a lone worker?

Anybody who works alone is classed as a lone worker. Lone workers within Rainbow Horses might include:

- Facilitators, assessors or verifiers
- Staff transporting learners
- Those who travel away for meetings or training sessions.
- Self-employed lone workers

As an employee person you have a duty to protect your own health and safety. If you're self-employed and you work alone, this means you must identify and minimise any risks that working alone involves.

Employed lone workers

If you own a centre and employ other facilitators, you have the same responsibilities for their health and safety as for any other employees. You may, however, need to take extra precautions to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than your other employees.

Our responsibilities to lone workers

We have the same health and safety responsibilities for lone workers as we do for other people who work for us.

A health and safety risk assessment will highlight areas where further action may be needed to remove or minimise the chance of incidents occurring.

Lone workers may be affected by many of the same health and safety risks as other workers. However, there are potential risks which are more likely to affect lone workers.

It's important for us to:

- Ensure lone workers have no medical conditions which may make them unsuitable for the lone-working role they have been assigned.
- Be aware that some tasks may be too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by an unaccompanied worker (such as leading an equine assisted learning session).
- Provide some level of supervision - such as regular visits - for lone workers.
- Put contact procedures in place for emergencies so that the alarm can be raised and prompt medical attention provided if there is an accident.
- Make provision for lone workers who may be faced with a risk of violence (eg when visiting families).

As with other workers, you must report major accidents, injuries and diseases involving lone workers.

The health and safety responsibilities of people who work alone

Lone workers - including self-employed ones - have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable care to look after their own health and safety

- safeguard the health and safety of other people affected by their work
- co-operate with their employer's health and safety procedures
- use tools and other equipment properly, in accordance with relevant safety instructions and any training they have been given
- not misuse equipment provided for their health and safety

If one of your workers works remotely, they still have the same responsibilities for information security. They must still back up their information, keep backups safe, ensure that equipment and software is up to date, and make sure people cannot read, overhear or steal their information.

It's also crucial that lone workers report any accidents, injuries, near misses and other dangerous occurrences. Without this information, it's much more difficult to conduct a realistic risk assessment and to put necessary safety procedures and precautions in place.

Bear in mind that if you are self employed and you engage a lone worker, you have health and safety responsibilities towards that person, and they have the various responsibilities listed above.

Carry out a risk assessment for lone workers

Your health and safety risk assessment should cover all potential risks and hazards in your business. This covers risks faced by everyone who is in contact with your business, including you, your employees, contractors, clients, suppliers and other visitors to your workplace. It also includes the families of people who work for you from home.

The risks faced by lone workers can differ from those faced by others.

The actions you take as a result of the risk assessment may also need to be different for lone workers. For example, lone workers cannot easily ask more experienced colleagues for help with dangerous tasks or equipment, so extra training may be required.

Your general emergency procedures may not be sufficient to protect the health and safety of lone workers. For instance, getting first-aid treatment may be more difficult for an injured lone worker working off-site than for on-site workers.

Contact procedures are crucial. How will you enable a lone worker to stay in touch with colleagues or with back-up in case of security risks? For example, what procedures would be followed if a horse kicked out and hurt a lone facilitator?

Checklist: assessing possible risks for lone workers

Your risk assessment should consider a wide range of factors that may endanger a lone worker's health and safety. This includes checking whether there is any specific legal requirement to have more than one worker for certain activities . Make sure you:

- Assess whether the risks of the job can be controlled by an individual working on their own.
- Find out whether proper training has been provided.
- Consider whether the workplace presents special risks for someone on their own. For instance, someone working with a ladder might need another person to stabilise it.
- Take into account whether the work involves handling dangerous equipment or substances that require supervision.
- Consider whether the work is particularly stressful.
- Consider whether there is a risk of violence.
- Assess whether the lone worker is medically fit to work alone.
- Consider whether certain groups of people face particular risks - such as trainees, young, pregnant or disabled workers.
- Arrange contingency for lone workers if their first language is not English, to ensure clear communication, especially in an emergency.
- Make contingency plans in case the worker falls ill or has an accident, or there is an emergency such as a fire or hazardous spillage.

- Arrange adequate supervision and monitoring for lone workers.

It is recommended that employers review risk assessments at least annually, or when there has been a significant change in working practice.

Security for people working alone

People working alone may face greater security risks than other workers. If there is an accident, there may be nobody to help them. They may also run an increased risk of violence.

If you allow people to work remotely - eg outside of the office or at home - you will probably encounter different security risks. For example, they are unlikely to have facilities for disposing of sensitive papers securely, or have lockable filing cabinets or safes. As a result, you will need to adapt your procedures to accommodate this.

You should consider the security of lone workers when conducting your health and safety risk assessment. A crucial point to establish is how people working on their own will be able to stay in contact with you or with a supervisor:

- For some lone workers - such as those working away from your main base - regular visits can be an important way of making sure that there are no problems.
- Regular communications via phone or radio enable you to keep in contact with lone workers. For some roles - such as a delivery driver - this kind of contact might be a normal part of the job.
- You could have an automatic warning system if the lone worker fails to check in on schedule. For instance, security personnel might be expected to check in with a central supervisor every hour.
- Emergency alarms fitted in your premises are another option - a lone worker could activate these in case of problems.

You may need to take extra precautions for the security of mobile lone workers. For example, you could put together a daily itinerary for each one so that other staff know where they might be.

If you are a self-employed lone worker, you must make your own security arrangements. For example, it can be a good idea to tell a friend whenever you are going out on a job.

Special considerations for lone workers who deal with the public

You have responsibilities for the health and safety of anyone affected by your business' activities - including customers, suppliers, contractors and other visitors to your workplace.

You also have to consider any risks that lone workers might present - directly or indirectly - to other people.

Consider the following issues:

- Is the lone worker operating in an environment in which the work may create risks for others? Lone workers may work in environments which are less safe than your business premises. For example, a home is unlikely to have the same safety equipment as an office or factory.
- Does the lone worker have access to a first aid kit or do they have first aid training? This will help them deal with minor injuries either to themselves or to members of the public.
- Does the lone worker have a mobile phone or other means of communication to allow them to seek help in case of an emergency?
- Is a lone worker able to restrict public access and cordon off any dangerous areas if necessary?
- Are you aware of any possible health and safety considerations for a lone worker

working in other business premises? It's important to consult the relevant owner or manager to identify what these are.

- Have you considered the safety of those lone workers who have a higher probability of encountering violence, eg those that work with the public or who work at night? If a violent incident does take place, you need to record it.

If you and/or your workers deal with members of the public who may pose a threat, it might be a good idea to set up a system of identifying these people in your records. However, remember that the data protection laws apply.

People who work alone from home

Don't assume that employees who work at home aren't at risk. As an employer, you have the same responsibility for the health and safety of people who work from home as for any of your other workers.

Ensuring premises and work practices are safe

In many cases, domestic premises won't be as well-equipped as business premises that have been built specifically as work environments. For example, a lone worker's house may have poor lighting, ventilation and equipment, or its electrical wiring may be old and unreliable.

It can also be difficult to ensure that homeworkers work in a safe way. For example, it's difficult to check that regular breaks from working at a computer are being taken. Or that possible distractions such as telephones, radios and televisions are not increasing the risk of an accident occurring.

Protecting the health and safety of lone homeworkers

Your health and safety risk assessment must consider whether work being done at home might cause harm - either to homeworkers themselves or to other people. This may require visiting the homes in question, although a thorough questionnaire or similar process may be able to identify key potential hazards.

Consider drawing up a homeworking policy which sets out key steps to be taken by people working at home to protect their health and safety.

You may also want to insist that certain safety standards are met before allowing people to work from home.

Reducing the risks of remote working

Most of the security risks involved in working away from the office occur in the home or in transit - for example on buses and trains. You should ensure that all of your workers are aware of these risks and avoid:

- leaving equipment unattended in a public place or in a car
- displaying confidential or sensitive information on a laptop screen in a public place
- using public access to the internet - eg internet cafes - when working on sensitive information

You should ensure that your workers are aware of several common sense security precautions they can take. For example, where relevant your workers should:

- use hotel safes, either in rooms or at reception, to store valuable equipment and information when not in use
- check that laptops or workstations have adequate, up to date virus protection software installed
- back up data regularly and keep these backups safe and secure
- use a shredder - ideally a 'cross shredder' - to destroy sensitive papers when no longer required
- destroy CDs containing sensitive information when no longer required
- store valuable or sensitive papers, discs and CDs in a fireproof safe
- ensure that valuable equipment is locked away when not in use
- have their home checked by the local Crime Prevention Officer, who can also advise on how they can protect their work information

Insurance

If you are running a business from home, you should make sure that you get any valuable

equipment covered by an appropriate insurance policy. General household insurance is unlikely to cover expensive business equipment or your liability if someone is hurt while visiting your business.

If your home is damaged and you are unable to work there for a period of time, it is also unlikely that general household insurance will cover any loss of income. You should also be careful about taking office equipment off site - such as laptop computers - as many policies will be invalidated if equipment is damaged or lost outside of the insured premises.

Monitoring lone workers' health and safety effectively

It is not possible to continuously supervise lone workers, but communicating with them regularly and monitoring their working conditions and practices plays an important part in reducing health and safety risks.

Employers are required to consult their workforce on health and safety matters. It is important to talk to employees, as they are a valuable source of information and advice. Effective consultation will also help to ensure that all relevant hazards are identified and appropriate, proportionate control measures chosen.

There are various steps you can take depending on the type of work being carried out and the type of premises being used. You could:

- Make regular visits to a lone worker. This is the best way of monitoring workplace hazards and safe working practices.
- Consider increased supervision where employees are new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job which presents special risks, or dealing with new situations.
- Set up a simple procedure for lone workers to report incidents such as accidents and near misses.
- Make sure lone workers know that they should take regular breaks and avoid working excessively long hours.
- Ask people working on their own if they feel there are any safety concerns that aren't being addressed.
- Encourage lone workers to seek help and advice if any safety concerns arise.
- Encourage lone homeworkers to visit your business premises every now and again. Face-to-face contact with colleagues might help them feel part of a team.
- Make sure that lone workers can keep in regular contact with you, especially those facing particular risks of accident or violence.
- Make sure you provide lone workers with any necessary training, instruction or demonstration.
- Keep confidential records - higher sickness rates or increased absenteeism levels may indicate potential problems.

Our aim is to ensure that lone workers aren't at greater risk than other workers. With this in mind we have made a decision **that facilitating equine assisted learning sessions with children, young people and vulnerable adults is not to be conducted by a lone worker except in exceptional circumstances and when a full risk assessment has been conducted in advance.**

Director's signature: Sue Coombes

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