

## **BBSRC Lone Working Policy**

### **Contents**

#### **Policy statement**

- 1. Principles**
- 2. Restrictions**
- 3. Organisation and responsibilities**
- 3. Health and Safety arrangements**
- 5. Policy review**
- 6. Amendment history**

## Lone Working Policy Statement

In operating this policy we define “lone working” as: “Any situation or location in which someone works without a colleague nearby: or when someone is working out of sight or earshot of another colleague.” Examples of this could include:

- taking part in field work away from the main site
- travelling alone to a conference
- working late in an office
- home working

BBSRC recognises that in certain circumstances lone working is unavoidable. In these cases we will assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

The lone working policy has been agreed with local Health and Safety Advisors and the Trade Union Side and complies with statutory best practice.

The UK Shared Business Services (SBS) provides HR Services across the Research Councils. However, some BBSRC employees are deployed at establishments that do not access services from the SBS. In these cases, references to the SBS or system (Employee Self Service) will not apply and employees should refer to their local HR team for assistance.

## **1. Principles**

1.1 BBSRC will ensure that the lone working policy complies with and reflects legislation and best practice.

1.2 BBSRC will make every effort to reduce the risk to employees, students, visitors etc by implementing suitable and effective control measures including the use of physical and technological systems and devices.

1.3 All employees are expected to accept responsibility for and support the need to operate, systems, procedures and technology provided for their enhanced protection.

1.4 This policy will be supported by the provision of training, instruction and supervision to enable employees to prevent and manage situations, and to use procedures, systems or devices provided for their security and safety, to their best effect.

## **2. Restrictions**

2.1 Lone working is subject to risk assessment under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999). There are a number of Health and Safety Regulations which prohibit or restrict lone working in some work situations and activities. The risk assessment will set out specific requirements for supervision, assistance or accompanied working if:

- Hazardous work is carried out;
- Particular categories of workers, such as young or inexperienced workers are carrying out activities that require direct supervision.

Examples of activities include:

- Work with certain chemicals
- Hazardous electrical work (e.g. manipulation of live uninsulated power conductors)
- Inexperienced radiation workers
- Some manual handling activities
- Erection of scaffolding
- Use of unsupported temporary access equipment (e.g. ladders which cannot be secured and require footing by a second person)
- Entry to and work within confined spaces
- Working with livestock and agricultural machinery
- Working with biohazardous material at Containment Level 3 or Containment Level 4
- Driving for work.

2.2 In addition to this, each institute/site may have specific local rules and restrictions which employees must note and follow.

### **3. Organisation and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Establishment Directors**

The Institute Grant Agreement states that “The Institute will take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with all legal requirements and best practice for health and safety, environmental compliance and the security of staff in relation to the operation of the Institute”.

Establishment Directors have overall responsibility for all matters of health and safety within their establishment and therefore have responsibility to ensure that the management structures are in place and are working effectively to satisfy the requirements of this policy.

#### **3.2 Line Managers**

It is the responsibility of Line Managers to:

- Disseminate and implement this policy within their area of responsibility
- Identify individuals who are lone workers
- Ensure that risk assessments on lone workers are being carried out and are regularly reviewed
- Ensure that any actions which are required as a result of the risk assessments are implemented. This includes the appropriate level of supervision.
- Ensure that procedures are in place so that they are aware of the whereabouts of lone workers
- Ensure that individuals are given time off to attend essential training relating to lone working and personal safety
- Take into account the health and medical condition of any lone worker
- Ensure procedures are in place to deal with emergencies that may arise when lone working
- Ensure that any reports of incidents or accidents are investigated and, where necessary, action taken
- Ensure that appropriate support is given to staff following an incident

#### **3.3 Lone workers (including employees, students, contractors, etc).**

It is the responsibility of lone workers to:

- Co-operate by following rules and procedures designed to protect the safety of lone workers
- Assist in the completion of any documentation required, including risk assessments
- Provide information on their whereabouts during working hours to a supervisor/manager
- Where indicated, use technology provided for their safety e.g. mobile phones or lone worker alarm devices
- Attend lone worker or personal safety related training programmes as directed by their manager
- Ensure they know how to respond in an emergency situation and report all incidents and near misses to Line Managers and H&S

### **3.4 Health and Safety Advisers and Security Management Specialists**

Health and Safety Advisers and local security management specialists are responsible for:

- Producing local procedures and guidelines as necessary, this may be included in other documents such as local transport policies
- Advise the establishment/site on systems, processes and procedures to improve personal safety of lone workers and make sure that proper preventative measures are in place
- Providing advice, assistance and training to managers and individuals in carrying out risk assessments; advising on risk reduction measures.
- Ensuring all incidents related to lone working are recorded and appropriately investigated.

## **4. Health and Safety arrangements**

### **4.1 Local arrangements**

Each establishment/site will assess the risks of lone working in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and will confirm whether the work can actually be done safely by one unaccompanied person. Particular consideration will be given to:

- The remoteness or isolation of workplaces
- Any problems of communication
- The possibility of interference, such as violence or criminal activity from other persons
- The nature of injury or damage to health and anticipated "worst case" scenario

- Vulnerable workers, such as the young, inexperienced, expectant mothers and new staff.

## 4.2 Information and training

Each establishment/site will ensure that employees are provided with all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved with working alone. Employees are expected to attend any training provided by their establishment.

## 4.3 Permits to work

In certain circumstances, when the risks are considered high or where specific legal requirements exist, (refer to Section 2.1) some or all of the procedures may be contained in a written permit to work. The permit must be authorised by the relevant manager and if not, the activity must not take place. Copies of permits will normally be issued to everyone directly involved with the activity, e.g. the solitary worker, the closest supervisor and the relevant manager. Where time limits are a consideration, e.g. to control exposure to heat, fatigue or to ensure essential supplies such as breathing gases are not exhausted, the permit would state the required starting and finishing times or the maximum duration of the task.

## 4.4 Review and audit

Each establishment/site will carry out regular inspections and/or audits to ensure compliance, help identify opportunities for improvement, develop action plans and share good practice. The following performance indicators are examples of what may be used to audit the effectiveness of this policy:

- Risk assessments are completed for situations in which employees work alone
- Control measures produced from the risk assessment process are regularly reviewed
- Incident reports and investigations are appropriately actioned
- Records are maintained of any training undertaken
- Any equipment provided and used to support the lone worker system is evaluated

## 5. Policy review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored through the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

## 6. Amendment history

Version	Date	Comments/Changes


HSBS June 2016