

Woolf Institute: Lone Working Policy

Policy Brief & Purpose:

It is inevitable that at times staff, students and others will find themselves working alone. These occasions can occur at the beginning and end of flexible working periods, during holidays, during the night and at weekends. There is no overall legal prohibition on working alone, but workplace responsibilities for Health and Safety (i.e. Health and Safety Act 1974, Safety at Work Regulations 1999) still apply. As such, the Institute as an employer has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees. These requirements are applicable to all work situations, including where staff (and others) are working alone or outside normal working hours.

Definitions:

- Lone Worker: Persons are to be considered working alone if they have neither visual nor audible communication with someone who can summon assistance in the event of an accident or illness.
- Normal Working Hours: 8:00 am to 6:00 pm from Monday to Friday, except public holidays.

Employee Responsibilities:

- All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own safety and to cooperate with Institute procedures. Employees should not knowingly place themselves in situations which expose them to additional risk by working alone.
- Employees should be aware of all fire safety procedures before engaging in lone work within the Institute premises.
- If a person finds that they are placed in a situation which may be considered to be that of a 'lone worker', then they should ensure that their Line Manager or Supervisor is made aware of the circumstances at the earliest opportunity and then assist in the process of identifying the steps needed to either prevent the lone worker situation from arising, or, if this is not possible, assist in developing the precautions necessary to ensure their own safety.
- Lone workers have a responsibility to inform their Line Manager if they have any concerns over the effectiveness and efficiency of the agreed arrangements and also if there are any reasons why they would not be able to work alone or to continue to work alone in safety.

Employer Responsibilities:

- All lone working activities should be formally identified and appropriate risk assessments undertaken, which identify the risk to lone workers and the control measures necessary to minimise those risks, as far as reasonably practicable.
- Staff/students must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk, as far as possible.
- Staff/students should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety.
- Prior to working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with their Line Manager.

- Staff/students must inform their line manager or other relevant identified personnel when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following agreed procedure to inform that person when the task is completed.
- Arrangements for lone working are communicated effectively and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone is explicit.
- The lone worker is made aware of the hazards and understands all the necessary control measures that need to be put in place.
- Reasonable enquiries are made to ensure that the lone worker is medically fit to undertake the work alone.
- Adequate supervision, instruction and training are in place and that the lone worker is competent. The extent of the supervision is a management decision, which should be established through the risk assessment process. It should not be left to individual members of staff or students to decide if they require assistance/supervision.
- Monitoring of lone working practices is in place to ensure that control measures identified in the lone working risk assessment are being adhered to.
- This policy will be subject to regular review, unless changing circumstances require adjustments to be made earlier.

Please note that in light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, employees are not expected to work within the Institute premises. In the event that you need to travel to the Institute to access files, emails, or any other relevant work-related materials, you must inform your line manager in advance of arriving to the Institute. If you have any queries, you can also contact the Services and Administration team for further clarification.

By signing below, you agree that you have read and understood the Institute's Lone Working Policy (Last reviewed November 2020).

Employee Signature:

Line Manager Signature:

Date:
