

Lone Worker Policy

Policy

Unleashed Theatre Company (UTC) takes the Health & Safety of its employees and volunteers seriously. We have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our employees and volunteers while at work or carrying out volunteer activity. We realise that at any given time, staff or volunteers may be working or volunteering alone, either in our theatre spaces or externally.

Aim and scope

This policy is designed to alert employees and volunteers 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 volunteers a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

Related Policies and Procedures

Lone Working Risk Assessment
Lone Working Procedure

Related Legislation

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

Context

UTC has a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and volunteers while at work or engaged in volunteer activity. At any given time, employees or volunteers may be alone, either in our premises or when operating on our behalf externally. We are responsible for assessing the risks to lone workers and taking steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. Employees and volunteers 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 volunteers who either frequently or occasionally work or volunteer 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 volunteers 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 a 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

Supervision

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. We ensure that you understand the risks associated with your work and the relevant safety precautions.

- Employees or volunteers will be given training that covers lone working where appropriate during induction
- Employees or volunteers 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 volunteers carrying out duties alone have a mobile phone available at all times to enable them to contact the office in the event of an emergency.

Checking System

All out of hours lone working employees or volunteers should establish their own checking in and out system with either family, friends, or work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact number for Paul Martin (07795 640458) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time. Upon entering the building, volunteers are expected to sign the in/out board, removing their name when leaving.

Reporting Back

A system should be in place to ensure that a lone worker returns to their base or their home at the completion of a task away from the normal workplace. For high risk or frequent lone

workers the Theatre Manager may stipulate that the employee or volunteer must inform them of their whereabouts and the expected duration of the visit so that if the employee or volunteer has not reported in by the expected hour, a call will automatically be triggered to check the employee or volunteer is safe.

For occasional lone workers or low risk lone workers, they should inform a colleague, family member or friend where they are going and when they are expected back; arranging to ring that person at the conclusion of the visit; issuing a mobile phone number to allow a contact call to be made if the employee or volunteer's return is overdue. Use of diary systems or notice boards to indicate whereabouts can form part of this system. All employees or volunteers involved share a responsibility to maintain such informal systems for safe lone working.

UTC should also consider employees or volunteers who meet with visitors on a one-to-one basis on the premises. Whilst they are not alone in the building, they may be alone with the visitor in a place where other colleagues cannot see them. UTC should consider systems for ensuring that they have emerged safely from such a meeting and systems for raising an alarm if necessary.

Medical Conditions

Employees or volunteers should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

Task Not Suitable for Lone Working

Risk assessments will identify the hazards of work. When a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place, or the work reassigned to another employee or volunteer if appropriate or done in hours when they are not alone. For example, an employee or volunteer who arrives before other colleagues may be instructed not to attempt heavy manual lifting until another colleague arrives to assist.

Intruder

Employees or volunteers should not enter the premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately contact the police.

Violence at Work

The risk of violence may not be directly related to a particular property. It may be associated with the environmental issues like working alone outside, or a situation may arise where there was no previous history of incidents. Employees or volunteers likely to be lone workers in such situations should be trained in dealing with difficult people, in ways to recognise a risk and in behaviour which may reduce the risk (up to and including terminating the activity). All incidents of violence must be reported.

Accidents and Emergencies

Employees and volunteers operating alone should be made aware of the process for responding correctly to emergencies. Employees or volunteers who are alone in the theatre must inform Paul Martin (07795 640458) 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 volunteers, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors.

Unleashed Theatre Company ensures that measures are in place to reduce risk and that expectations have been communicated to employees and volunteers operating alone and appropriate training provided.

All staff and volunteers, 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.

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