

North Kirklees & Morley Methodist Circuit Policy for Lone Workers

Introduction

This policy has been written to include guidance for employers, employees and volunteers. The word employee has been used throughout, but similar good practice also applies to those in a covenantal relationship with the church and to volunteers. Some aspects of the guidance (for example, reference to a line manager) does not usually apply to volunteers or those in a covenantal relationship with the church but the same principles apply.

A risk assessment should be undertaken of:

- the working practices for a lone worker;
- the working environment provided by the employer for an employee.

The risk assessment would be part of the Health and Safety at Work Policy of an Employing Body.

Working practices for a lone worker

Lone workers include those who:

- work away from an office base (e.g. visiting)
- work outside normal working hours (e.g. cleaners)
- are the only person on the premises (e.g. administrator; caretaker)
- work in the same building as colleagues but in a space on their own (e.g. receptionists)

At times, circuit employees will be in situations where they are a 'lone worker'. The recommendations below try to be realistic about what can and cannot be put in place. Whilst it must be recognised that the circuit, as an employer, does not have the structure associated with a large business, it aims to be a good employer who is concerned about the safety of its employees.

Many lay employees work on a part-time basis, from their own home and so it is equally important to have a system in place to account for their safety too. It is important to note that lone workers maybe at higher risk of being seriously harmed by hazards at work because there may not be anyone to support or help them in the event of an accident or illness. The circuit must ensure that it trains, supervises, and monitors the provision of robust health and safety practices for its employees, as part of its overall duty of care.

Responsibilities of the employer

- To assess the 'reasonably foreseeable risks' (e.g. Is there glass in the office door so that all callers can be seen before the door is opened? Does the circuit Youth Club finish at the same time as the local pub/football match etc? Does the cleaner work late at night and needs to use an un-lit passageway to get home?)
- To ensure that a system is in place for calling for help if there is a problem on the premises eg emergency alarm.

Taken from <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/employees-and-volunteers/lay-employment-resource/8-key-policies-and-guidance-documents/lone-working/downloadable-templates-lone-working-risk-assessment-and-guidelines/>

- To keep on file in a secure place, the employee and their next-of-kin contact phone numbers [and vehicle registration details if this is used for work purposes].
- To keep records of any health issues that may affect the employee whilst working alone and review this as necessary
- To ensure that a system is in place so that the employer knows that an employee is safe when working on their own either on or off the premises. (E.g.: via phone calls and location visits)
- To provide all employees making home visits with a mobile phone or reimbursement of costs incurred for work-related calls made. [Consider whether other employees would benefit from the provision of a mobile phone as well].
- To ensure that the employee receives a Health and Safety Induction training and that the Certificate of Employers Liability is displayed in the office at all times.
- Check that insurance cover adequately covers the work to be undertaken. Ensure an accident book is kept up to date at all times.
- To ensure the availability of appropriate and adequate personal protective equipment for mandatory use by employees as necessary.
- Provide an accident book and ensure it is kept up to date at all times.

In relation to a lone worker risk assessment, consideration should also be given to:

- the remoteness of the work place;
- potential communication problems;
- potential for verbal and physical abuse and violence;
- Vulnerability of lone workers to feelings of isolation, stress, anxiety and depression;
- Whether or not all the plant, equipment, materials etc can be handled safely by one person;
- Whether or not the person is medically fit and able to work alone;
- How the lone worker will be supervised effectively;
- How the lone worker will obtain help in an emergency such as assault, vehicle breakdown, accident or fire etc;
- Whether or not there is adequate first aid cover and the lone worker's capacity to administer this on themselves before help arrives.

Responsibilities of the employee

- To take reasonable care for your own safety;
- To report any incidents of violence or aggressive behaviour etc;
- To arrange to meet unknown individuals in a public place and preferably with another person present;
- If making a home visit, to make sure that someone knows where you are going and when you can be expected back. Ensure that you have a switched on working mobile phone on you, at all times.

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- If practical, to leave a note stating who and where you are visiting and how you will get there;
- To consider a 'buddy system' when you let a colleague or friend know that you have arrived at a visit/premises and when leaving a visit/ premises.
- To consider carrying a Personal Shriek Alarm
- To always stay alert and be 'streetwise' and vigilant, taking note of what is going on around you.

Useful Links:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.htm>

Health and Safety in churches and other places of worship downloadable from Methodist Insurance's website: Please refer to www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

See also: risk assessment form for lone workers.

Last Date Modified: 13th November 2025

(a signed copy is kept in the Circuit Office)

Risk Assessment Form (Template)

Circuit: North Kirklees & Morley

Employee:

Date of Assessment:

Below is an example for a Cleaner:

What are the risks / hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to manage this risk?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
<i>Slips, trips, falls & Pandemic virus/contagious /infections</i>	<i>Cleaner and visitors risk injuries such as fractures and bruising if they trip over objects, slip on spillages or wet floors and fall. Pandemic virus/contagious infections</i>	<i>We carry out general good housekeeping. All areas are well lit including stairs. There are no trailing leads or cables. Cleaner keeps work areas clear, eg no boxes left in walk ways. Cleaner uses electrical socket nearest to where they are working to reduce risk of tripping over leads. Cleaner is instructed to keep off wet floors. Cleaner required to wear protective clothing eg mask, face visor & use hand sanitiser etc</i>	<i>Introduce a two-mop system for cleaning hard floors (ie wet mop followed by dry mopping).</i> <i>Cleaner instructed to wear sensible shoes, ie flat shoes with a good grip</i> <i>Provision of PPE ie personal protective equipment</i> <i>Ensure regular and adequate training</i> <i>Ensure accident book is kept update</i> <i>Provision First Aid kit</i>	<i>Cleaner, and supervisor to monitor</i>	<i>31/08/2012</i>	<i>31/08/12</i>
		Add more rows as needed				

Employers with five or more employees must have a written health and safety policy and risk assessment.

It is important you discuss your assessment and proposed actions with the employee.

You should review your risk assessment if you think it might no longer be valid, eg following an accident/hazardous event in the workplace, or if there are any significant changes to the risks or hazards in your workplace, such as new equipment or pandemic virus/infection or work activities or legal requirements.