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LONE/CONNECTED WORKER – Past, Present & Future

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Santa Clara County Safety Conference
QSSP – Qualified Safety Sales Professional.
20 + years of selling solutions to end users like you.
Specialties/Certifications in Confined Space, Lone/Connected Worker, Respiratory Protection, Fall Protection and Gas Detection.
- Main Topics -

What is a Lone Worker?
What does the law say about Lone Workers?
Tell me about your policy…
Assessing the Risks.
Effective and Acceptable Control Measures.
Equipment (PPE) to Assist.
Practical Tips.
**What is a Lone Worker?**

Lone Worker (or Working alone) refers to situations in which a worker is performing their job duties in isolation from other workers. Whether that means they are the only employee present at the workplace or maybe in a separate room or area where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of injury, ill health, or an emergency.

Examples - After hours (on call), Municipal workers, Utility workers, Lab personnel, Mobile Workers, Security, etc…
- What is a Lone Worker? -

A day in the life of Jack the field technician. Work orders in the AM, phone call/text that changes the work day. Gets called to a location where the HVAC unit on top of roof has stopped working………what could possibly go wrong? Slip, Trip, Fall, Electrocution, Heat (Cold) Stress, Etc. Day could go without a hitch.
Working alone is generally an accepted practice in the U.S. Only specific industries/applications have legislation specific to “Lone Workers”

Legislation to protect lone workers currently exists in the U.K., Australian States and the 9 Canadian Provinces.
OSHA Section 5(a)(1) – General Duty Clause to furnish employees a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to their employees.

Even though these regulations are for ship yards, there is some good content to take:

1915.84(a) Whenever an employee is working alone, such as in a isolated location, the employer shall account for each employee:

(1) Throughout each work shift at “regular intervals” (2) At the end of the job assignment (3) Shall account for each employee by sight or verbal communication.
The Legal Framework – U.S. Regulations on Lone Worker-

- 29 CFR 1910.120: Requires a buddy system during HazWOPER operations.
- 29 CFR 1910.134: Firefighters encountering an atmosphere immediately dangerous to life and health (Respiratory) must follow the two-in/two-out rule.
- 29 CFR 1910.269: Relates to job tasks that require at least two electrical generation personnel.
- 29 CFR 1915.84: Pertains to lone work in a confined space or remote location in shipyards.
- 56 CFR 18020: Concerns monitoring miners on MSHA sites.
- Tell me about your policy -

Is someone willing to share what works (or doesn't) at your place of business?
Who uses call in logs? If you were to get audited, would you pass
Risk Assessment – A systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking. The goal is to identify potential hazards. Here are some questions to ask:

Is the current way we monitor our employees doing enough?
Is there Material, Environmental, Equipment or Accessibility issues?
Does the workplace present any known risks to the lone worker? (More importantly - what about the unknown?)
Are any chemicals or hazardous substances being used that can create unconsciousness?
Medical Conditions?
Language Constraints?
- Assessing the Risks –
- Hierarchy of Controls for Lone Workers -

1) Elimination: Involves removing the hazard altogether.
2) Substitution: Involves replacing the material/process with something less hazardous.
3) Engineering controls: Involves job modification, Isolate hazards.
4) Administrative controls: Involves changing work processes.
5) Behavior-based controls: Involves modification of safe work behaviors.
6) PPE: Involves providing the lone worker with equipment to perform tasks safely.
Effective and Acceptable Control Measures -

Control Measures include actions that can be taken to reduce the potential of exposure to the hazard. The best one would be to eliminate any hazards, but here are a few more that may work:

- Training
- Can not perform as a “Lone Worker” list
- Buddy System – Paying two people to do one person’s job.
- PPE - Communication Devices

The biggest thing is… do you have something in place and is it effective? (Could you defend it in court?)
What Training is Needed?

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty.

Training may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations.

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and precautions fully.

Set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone.

Ensure employees are competent to deal with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, such as when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor and how to handle potential workplace violence.
- Equipment (PPE) to Assist -

Radios.
Immediate Notification Systems – Person Down Alarms “local” vs. “Off-site”.
Cellular Phones for “Call ins”. Do you log these calls?
Gas Monitors w/ Closed Loop Wireless Technology.
Gas Monitors w/ Bluetooth to Cellular Connection Applications.
Wi-Fi connected devices.
Connected (on or off site) Web-Based Solutions.
- Let’s Explore -

Radios – Two way communication if within your managed area. Units out there that will prompt you to use it if not used in a certain amount of time – alarm will sound. Effective if you know where the user is.

Immediate Notification Systems – Short Range (unless 3rd party integration, OBD – ties it to the vehicle).

Gas Monitor – Closed loop (WiFi or Mesh Technology, limited range Cellular and Box Applications.

Global Connected Web-Based Solution – SOS alert, 3rd Party Monitoring, Voice Communication, Man Down, No Motion, Fall Detection, Two Way Texting, Evacuation Management, Gas Detection.
- Practical Tips -

Conduct risk assessments.
Train “Lone Workers” on emergency response.
Establish a clear action plan in case of emergency.
Set limits for what is permissible (or not) during lone work.
Require supervisors to make periodic visits to observe “Lone Workers”.
Ensure regular contact between “Lone Workers” and supervisors.
Have a plan to assure that all “Lone Workers” are accounted for.
Additional Information

Working Alone in Safety: Controlling the risks of solitary work - Health and Safety Executive the United Kingdom
http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf

Working Alone – Canadian Centre for Occupational Safety & Health
http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/workingalone.html

Core Safety Rules (WAC 296-800)
(Basic safety and health rules needed by most employers in Washington State)

Additional Safety Rules
(Fall protection, ladders, machine safety, lockout/tagout, electrical, hearing conservation, etc.)
http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/RULES/Find/RuleName/default.htm
Thank you for having us today.
We would love to help you with your ”Lone Worker” solutions:

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