

936. Lone Worker Safety

Effective: 12/29/2021

.1 Purpose

- .11 The Lone Worker policy are intended to promote employee awareness and facilitate employee safety for workers who are required to work alone and may require assistance if they are exposed to conditions that may result in a job-related injury, health impairment of any kind, victimization through criminal violence, or other adverse conditions.
- .12 The City of Tulsa (CoT) will ensure that there are specific practices and procedures in place to minimize the risk of injury or violence to employees who work alone. CoT will ensure, applying all reasonable measures, the protection of employees who are performing their duties in areas or under conditions where they are required to be Lone Workers.

.2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees who work alone. This policy is applicable regardless of locality of work.

.3 Definitions

- .31 Risk Assessment: Individually and collectively, supervisors and workers are required to assess the conditions or circumstances under which an employee may be a Lone Worker to determine the risks, the level of risk, and prevention measures required to reduce those identified risks to acceptable levels. A critical part of the risk assessment is the determination of emergency assistance procedures.
- .32 Lone Worker: Individuals are considered to be a Lone Worker when they are working by themselves in an office, vehicle, laboratory, workshop, field site, or any area owned or operated by CoT or place where work is being conducted for CoT. A means of summoning assistance in some capacity must be readily available to the employee, in the event of an injury, illness, or emergency.
- .33 Emergency Assistance: a means of communication to gain assistance in the event of an emergency involving an accident or serious injury, illness, or threat of violence.
- .34 After Hours: The period of time when “normal” weekday or shift operations cease.

.35 Field Work: Field work consists of work activities conducted at locations outside the geographical boundaries of CoT facilities.

.4 Responsibilities

In order for the Lone Worker policy and procedures to be effective, they will be implemented with reason and diligence. To achieve this, respective responsibilities have been defined to ensure those who can positively impact on the potential risks of Lone Worker are aware of their responsibilities and have the knowledge and skill to effectively implement Lone Worker guidelines.

.41 Supervisor implementation and training responsibilities

- .411 Identify risks or hazards associated with the work to be performed or the environment where the work is to be done.
- .412 Conduct and document a risk/hazard assessment for each different (specific) type of work or work location that can be deemed to be a Lone Worker situation.
- .413 Communicate the results of the risk assessment to all affected workers and others conducting similar work.
- .414 Develop written Lone Worker procedures in their area of responsibility in order to eliminate or minimize identified risks.
- .415 Develop effective methods of communication for those who require emergency assistance, depending on the specific work, location of the work, and nature of the work. (For example: cell phones, radio, and pager).
- .416 Establish an effective contact system when electronic devices are not feasible. For example: check-in procedures and periodic site visits requiring worker to check in after the completion of specific tasks.
- .417 Determine plans based on the length of time a worker may be out of contact with a supervisor (the frequency of regular communications) and based on the results from the risk assessment.
- .418 Document when a Lone Worker is permitted and/or prohibited and ensure this is effectively communicated to all workers.

.419 Schedule potentially hazardous work for times when supervisors and appropriate help will be available.

.4110 Provide adequate staffing (for example: buddy system) for hazardous tasks performed at off hours or remote locations.

.42 Worker responsibilities

.421 Participate in the Lone Worker risk assessment and risk management decisions with the supervisor.

.422 Follow safe work practices outlined in safe work procedures.

.423 Maintain regular communication as directed by supervisors.

.43 Safety and Health Department

.431 Monitor applicable legislation to ensure the Lone Worker policy is up to date and incorporates any new or revised regulatory requirements.

.432 Provide consultation to supervisory staff in the development of departmental and site-specific Lone Worker plans.

.433 Upon request, assist with the development of department and site-specific Lone Worker plans.

.434 Develop, modify and update as required a standard Lone Worker checklist to be used as the basis for documentation of objective information concerning the specific Lone Worker requirements.

.435 Audit to determine the effectiveness of the Lone Worker procedure within the CoT community.

.5 Lone Work Prohibited

.51 Working alone will be prohibited under the following circumstances:

.511 Confined space entry

.512 Working on energized electrical conductor or equipment

- .513 Power line hazards: Use of a vehicle, crane, or similar equipment near a live power line where it is possible for any part or the equipment or its load to make contact with the live power line.
- .514 Use of supplied air respiratory equipment or self-contained breathing apparatus.
- .515 Risk of drowning.
- .516 Welding operation where a fire watcher is required
- .517 Tasks which, based on the risk assessment conducted by the supervisor, are deemed to require more than one person.

.6 Communication

- .61 The Lone Worker procedure may include the following to ensure the most practical and effective means of communication:
 - .611 Portable or cell telephone,
 - .612 Walkie-talkie,
 - .613 Personal alarm or pager,
 - .614 Buddy system,
 - .615 Check-in system and requirement for updating an individual's status while Lone Worker, or
 - .616 Any other method that may be considered most effective to the specific department's safe operations.
- .62 Each Lone Worker scenario will use these communication options, either singularly or in combination in the development of a site-specific Lone Worker communication plan.

.7 Guidelines for Conducting Lone Worker Risk Assessments

- .71 There are a number of scenarios within the CoT setting that call for jobs having Lone Worker situations. It is essential that employees and their supervisors work together to develop safe work procedures. It is mandatory that the working conditions or circumstances that present high safety risks be assessed so the probability of accident or injury can be minimized. Supervisors and employees will evaluate Lone Worker assignments on a

case-by-case basis and will consider the following risk factors for Lone Worker:

- .711 Tasks and hazards involved in the work to be performed.
 - .712 Consequences resulting from a “worst case” scenario. This will be accomplished by asking the question, “What if”
 - .713 Likelihood for other persons to be in the area.
 - .714 Possibility that a critical injury or incident could prevent the employee from calling for help or leaving the workplace.
 - .715 Emergency response time.
 - .716 Worker's training and experience.
 - .717 Worker's with physical disabilities or any preexisting medical conditions.
 - .718 Frequency of job supervision, if at all.
 - .719 The time or shift when the job is to be done.
 - .7110 Whether the individual is accustomed to Lone Worker.
- .72 Supervisors shall provide written Lone Worker safety plans for the safety and security of their employees. Safety plans shall include:
- .721 Identification of the risks or hazards associated with the work to be performed or the environment where the work is to be done;
 - .722 Procedures to eliminate or minimize the identified risks (e.g., buddy systems);
 - .723 Methods of communication by which lone workers can secure emergency assistance and how emergency assistance will be provided in the event of incidents or accidents.
 - .724 The length of time a worker may be out of contact with a supervisor (i.e., the frequency of regular communications); and
 - .725 Confirmation where and when Lone Worker is permitted.

- .73 Supervisors must review Lone Worker safety plans with affected employees with particular emphasis on safe work procedures and the provision of assistance to employees at risk due to infrequent supervision, intermittent communication, or physical isolation.
- .74 Completed Lone Worker plans must be copied to the employee and to the Safety & Health Department. Written safety plans should be reviewed annually and updated, if required.