

ARARAT BAPTIST CHURCH

Lone Worker Policy

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Reviewed: xx/xx/xxxx

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Introduction

Lone working is not covered by any specific legislation, but the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply

The legislation states that

“It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure as far as it is reasonably practicable the health safety and welfare at work of all employees.....It shall be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work; and as regards any duty or requirement imposed on their employer or any other person by, or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to cooperate with them so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.”

Employers and employees therefore, have a duty to themselves and others with regard to safety; and, there is an increased risk to the health and safety of any worker when they work alone

What is a Worker?

The term worker is used in this document to identify anyone who is performing a task on behalf of the church regardless of their role or position and whether that person is a paid individual or a volunteer

What is a ‘Lone Worker’?

A lone worker is defined as *“Anyone whose work includes a proportion of their time in situations where there is no close, frequent, or other involvement with other workers”*

Examples might include:

- Staff members or volunteers working in an otherwise empty church building
- Out of Hours reception staff
- The last person in the building – responsible for ensuring security
- Domestic cleaning staff working outside of normal working hours
- Ministerial staff or pastoral workers making a visit to someone alone
- Those ferrying people to and from Church/the Ark

This list is not exhaustive.

What this Policy seeks to address

This document details various practices which if acted upon will minimise the risks of working alone. The potential risks are many and varied and the list below is not exhaustive.

- Risks from intruders
- Risks from Fire
- Risks associated with the nature of the work being undertaken e.g. DIY
- Risks associated with the physical health of the worker
- Risks associated with the mental health of the worker
- Risks from tools or machinery utilised
- Risks associated with the lack of a chaperone or witness

These risks are often less significant when working in the presence or vicinity of others, and where possible, lone-working is best avoided. There are, however, times when lone working is unavoidable and sometimes necessary

Best practice guidelines for all Lone Workers

When working at church premises:

1. All lone workers should ensure that they are apprised of any known risks by their line manager or by a deacon,
2. All lone workers should be aware of the necessary actions to be taken in the event of an emergency e.g. fire.
3. All lone workers should ensure that someone, e.g. friend, relative or line manager is aware of their presence on the church premises and what time they plan to leave
4. Lone workers should advise the friend, relative or line manager when they have left the premises safely
5. Lone workers should advise the friend, relative or line manager to raise a concern with any of the church Trustees if they do not receive notification that the worker has left the church premises
6. Where possible, lone workers should not work in a place where they can be seen by those outside of the building
7. Unexpected callers to the building should be ignored, unless they are well known to the lone worker
8. Unknown visitors must never be granted access to the building
9. Lone Workers must be aware of all the various ways in which they may safely exit the building in the event of an emergency
10. Lone Workers must always have access to a telephone, ideally a mobile
11. Wherever possible lone workers should not work at height, with electrical appliances or attempt to effect repairs unless they have the appropriate skills to do so.
12. When working alone in a church building, and when no one is expected to attend, the entrances to the building should be locked.

Lone working is never acceptable if:

1. The worker has a health condition which could lead to sudden collapse, or a mobility issue such that they may not be able to leave the building quickly in the event of an emergency
2. The worker is under the age of 18, or an adult who is considered to be 'at risk'

Leaving a church building after a period of lone working

1. If a worker is the last person in the building, then it is important that the church buildings are left safe and secure. The following steps should be taken:
 - All fire doors to be shut
 - All windows closed and where possible locked
 - All lights switched off
 - Reception computer monitor switched off
 - All external doors closed and locked
 - All toilets flushed if necessary and all taps off
 - Exit by the rear staff entrance and alarm set

When working in the Community

1. Where possible the worker should ensure that a friend, relative or line manager is aware of their destination, and their expected time of return
2. The worker should ensure that the friend, relative or line manager is updated about any unavoidable delays and when the visit has been completed
3. The worker should ensure that the friend, relative or line manager is aware of how to raise a concern should it prove to be necessary
4. Wherever possible visits to people in their own homes should be undertaken in pairs rather than individually
5. Where a lone-worker visit is unavoidable, and the recipient of the visit is not well known to the worker or to the church, then a risk assessment form should be completed
6. Workers should be especially careful about offering lifts to unaccompanied minors and to unknown adults – wherever possible an accompanying passenger will mitigate the risk. The driver must ensure that their motor vehicle insurance provides cover for transporting passengers
7. When appropriate, lone workers may require a DBS check

Risk assessment and incident reporting

A risk assessment document need not be completed for every lone working episode. However, if a worker is tasked with something which is new to them, or which causes them any concern, then a consideration of the risks should be made and documented appropriately on the Church's risk assessment template. If the worker is satisfied that the risks can be managed safely and the identified risk mitigated then the worker may proceed. However, where the risks are deemed to be significant or cannot be adequately mitigated then the worker may decline to undertake the task.

A risk assessment template should usually be completed and passed to the Operations Manager in the following circumstances

1. The worker is new to lone working
2. A potential new risk has been identified and the degree of risk is uncertain e.g. a recent intruder/break-in
3. An unaccompanied visit to a less-well known person in the community is necessary
4. A lift is offered to a minor or to an 'adult at risk'

In the event of an untoward incident of whatever type occurring during a period of lone working, then the worker is responsible for completing a report, with as much information as possible concerning the incident, which should be given to the Operations Manager within one working-day of the event.

How will the information in this Policy be made available to lone workers?

1. The existence of the policy will be notified to all church members and friends through the Church Meeting and by sharing on the weekly email
2. Line Managers will be asked to share the policy with their staff and volunteers
3. Copies of the Policy will be given to those most likely to engage in lone-working i.e. paid staff, receptionists and Trustees
4. The policy will be publicly available on the Church website when this becomes possible

How and when will this policy be reviewed?

All Church policies are subject to annual review by the Trustees as part of its Cycle of Business

Other Policies which relate to Lone Working

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire

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