

A GUIDE TO LONE WORKER SAFETY

PROTECT YOUR WORKERS WITH AN EFFECTIVE SAFETY PROGRAM



As the number of lone workers continues to rise—with an estimated 15-20% of today's employees reportedly working by themselvesⁱ—so too do concerns about their safety.

To keep these vulnerable workers safe, it's vital to have a full picture of all the circumstances in which people work alone and what hazards they face. A comprehensive lone working program that defines roles, responsibilities, training and resources—alongside knowing the legislation in your jurisdiction—is equally vital.

This guide outlines strategies for building a robust lone worker safety program. The ultimate goal is to ensure every worker has the confidence to get the job done and return home safe to their families at the end of the day.



15-20%

of workforce are lone workers

44%

of those, felt unsafe while at work

20%

of those, struggled to get help after an incident

ⁱ Pennington, Bill and Pritam Kapadia, Strategic Focus: Reducing Lone Worker Injury and Fatality Rates (Verdantix, 2021).



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WHO ARE LONE WORKERS?

The variety of circumstances that define lone work might surprise you. While occupations like long-haul truck drivers or after-hours security guards might come to mind, the reality is the definition of what constitutes working alone is much broader. It's important that you have a complete view of all your solo workers.

The National Safety Council (NSC), a leading health and safety organization in the United States, classifies lone workers into four main categoriesⁱⁱ. Those who:

- 1. **WORK SEPARATELY FROM OTHERS AT A FIXED WORKSITE** – for example, factory workers, warehouse workers and machinery operators.
- 2. **WORK ALONE AWAY FROM THE MAIN WORKSITE** – for example, lone construction/trades workers, oil and gas field workers, and remote/hybrid workers.
- 3. **WORK ON THE MOVE/MOBILE WORKERS** – for example, transportation and logistics drivers, technicians on service-call outs, and sales reps.
- 4. **WORK IRREGULAR HOURS/SHIFT WORKERS** – for example, emergency responders, healthcare workers, and retail staff.



NSC whitepaper identifies strategies for protecting lone workers with a case study that features Blackline Safety's connected safety wearables.

[READ THE WHITEPAPER>](#)

ⁱⁱ [Using Lone Worker Monitoring Technology to Protect Workers \(National Safety Council, 2023\)](#)

HAZARDS AND RISKS

Lone workers are highly vulnerable workers. Since they operate predominantly out of sight and sound of their colleagues, they face increased likelihood and severity of incidents as a result of being unable to access immediate help.



“According to a 2021 survey, nearly 70% of organizations reported a safety incident involving someone working by themselves in the past three years, and 1 in 5 incidents were described as ‘quite or very severe.’”ⁱⁱⁱ

Katherine Mendoza, senior director, workplace programs, NSC.

Some of the most common risks to lone workers include:^{iv}

- gas or chemical exposure
- slips, trips and falls ([read a real-life incident](#))
- electrocution
- equipment accidents
- motor vehicle accidents
- sudden illness
- weather hazards ([read a real-life incident](#))
- remoteness and workplace violence



Discover how NiSource, one of the largest fully regulated utility companies in the US, kept its front-line lone workers safe in five safety incidents.

[READ THE CASE STUDY >](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.nsc.org/newsroom/work-to-zero-new-research-prevent-lone-worker-inci>

^{iv} <https://safetylinelonerworker.com/blog/lone-worker-incidents-in-the-workplace-it-is-more-common>

EVOLVING LEGISLATION

Work-alone legislation has been enacted in many regions. While a foundational component is the periodic confirmation of employee well-being—often through a manual check-in process—these protocols can be manually intensive and prone to human error. Employees forget to check in or out, causing false alarms. Supervisors get complacent and neglect to check in on someone who may need help. That’s why legislation is evolving and becoming more stringent globally^v:

- **UNITED KINGDOM LEADS THE WAY** – outlines formal parameters on the responsibilities of employers and lone worker equipment and monitoring equipment^{vi}, making it one of the most successful nations when it comes to workplace safety.
- **AUSTRALIA MANDATES MONITORING**^{vii} – makes it compulsory for employers to monitor the health and well-being of any of their employees working remotely or in isolated conditions.
- **DUTY OF CARE DEFINES UNITED STATES LEGISLATION**^{viii} – stipulates employers have a legal obligation to provide a workplace free from recognizable hazards that cause, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to employees when there is a feasible method to abate the hazard.
- **UNITED STATES** – Cal OSHA Senate Bill 553 requires every employer in California to formulate a comprehensive Workplace Violence Prevention Plan, train employees on how to identify and avoid workplace violence, and begin logging violent incidents in detail by July 2024.
- **CANADA**^{ix} – regulates working alone in three-quarters of provinces and territories with employer requirements to assess the health and safety hazards associated with each particular job.
- **ISO 45001**^x – outlines the world’s international standard for occupational health and safety for employees and visitors in the workplace. ISO 45001 has seen a 97.3% increase in worldwide certificates in 2020, a testament to its growing importance globally.



DID YOU KNOW?

Blackline Safety’s [G7c](#) is the only device certified to the newly revised BS 8484:2022 standard in the UK. The standard underpins the UK’s safety leadership by providing lone worker product and service providers with a code of practice related to the emergency response process.

[READ THE NEWS RELEASE>](#)

^v <https://www.blacklinesafety.com/hubfs/website/documents/white-paper/safety-monitoring-white-paper-en-na.pdf?hsLang=en-us>

^{vi} <https://www.blacklinesafety.com/blog/employee-safety-monitoring-in-the-uk-leadership>

^{vii} <https://safetylineloneworker.com/work-alone-regulations-international>

^{viii} <https://www.blacklinesafety.com/hubfs/website/documents/white-paper/safety-monitoring-white-paper-en-na.pdf?hsLang=en-us>

^{ix} <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/laws-regulations/labour/interpretations-policies/059.html>

^x <https://www.iso.org/the-iso-survey.html>

BENEFITS OF CONNECTED TECHNOLOGY

Cloud-connected IIoT safety devices—like gas detection and lone worker wearables, and area gas monitors—are becoming standard as workplaces transform digitally. They can link employees with live monitoring, enable real-time information sharing, collect vital location data, support more informed decision-making, and facilitate faster emergency responses. Most importantly, workers can confidently get their jobs done knowing they are protected.

LONE WORKER SOLUTIONS SAVE LIVES

Read four case studies on how Blackline’s connected safety solutions have ensured the safety of workers out of sight and sound—from snowmobilers to viaduct workers to night drivers.

[LEARN MORE >](#)



A survey of **224** lone workers and supervisors noted that **93%** of workers reported “sometimes” or “often” working outside of cell phone coverage, and **63%** have been unable to contact someone due to a lack of connection.^{xi}

^{xi} [Using Lone Worker Monitoring Technology to Protect Workers \(National Safety Council, 2023\)](#)

BENEFITS OF CONNECTED TECHNOLOGY

Specific capabilities to look for that support your lone work safety checklist include:



LOCATION TECHNOLOGY – integrates GPS to provide accurate positioning outdoors, alongside location beacons to provide more accurate positioning indoors where GPS signals may be weak or unavailable.



REAL-TIME VISIBILITY – harnesses built-in cellular-enabled cloud-connectivity for continuous communication and situational awareness, from anywhere.



SATELLITE CONNECTIVITY – offers additional coverage for a failsafe way to keep in touch, even in the most remote locations*.



TWO-WAY VOICE – enables monitoring personnel to talk with lone workers via speakerphone.



EMERGENCY SOS – allows employees to call for help manually and silently, without looking or potentially pressing the wrong button, to access support discreetly.



FALL/NO MOTION DETECTION – senses if a worker slips, trips, falls or when a person is motionless, then triggers an alarm.



MISSED CHECKED-IN – sends an alert if a worker fails to check-in and confirm their wellbeing at the agreed upon interval.



GAS DETECTION – detects potentially toxic, asphyxiant and explosive gas leaks in the atmosphere.



COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT – provides data-informed insights into how devices are used, calibrated and bump tested to understand and improve worker behavior.



AUTOMATED ANALYTICS – delivers out-of-the-box or customizable analytics to help you understand gas exposure, improve efficiency, and manage compliance.



24/7 LIVE MONITORING – uses professionally trained agents to expertly manage emergency alerts in real-time and gather critical insights for an informed response.

*Not available in all regions.

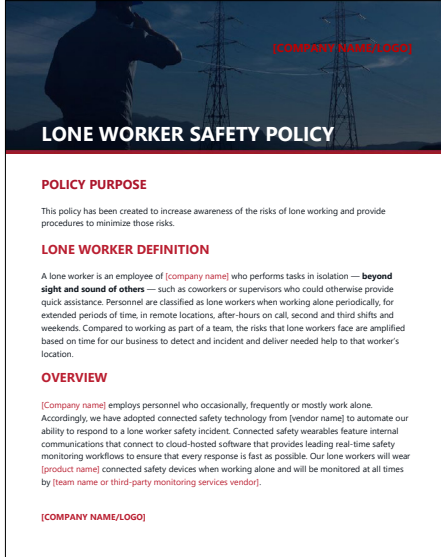
HOW TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE LONE WORKER SAFETY PROGRAM

5 Essential Elements of a Lone Worker Safety Policy

In addition to technology, a lone working policy can be one of the most important ways to protect the health and safety of your employees, setting the playbook for employees who work by themselves with no close supervision.

While a lone worker policy will need to be customized to the needs of your organization and team, there are basic common elements to include:

- **STATEMENT OF POLICY PURPOSE** – fosters engagement by outlining reasons for creating the policy, ways it will help keep lone workers safe and how it aligns organizational goals.
- **IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF LONE WORKER RISKS** – outlines the unique lone worker circumstances and roles in your organization. This comprehensive assessment should include factors such as who is at risk, hazard identification, level of risk, and precautionary measures for risk mitigation.
- **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** – specifies each person’s accountabilities, including the policies and required procedures (such as how often to check-in, how to travel between locations, equipment required, and communication channels) to keep themselves safe; and how and when managers must report an incident.
- **REPORTING PROCEDURES** – clearly lists the steps to be taken to report an incident; if you have more than one channel for reporting, provide instructions for each.
- **EMPLOYEE TRAINING, RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION** – makes it easy for employees to get answers to their questions, obtain the instructions they need and share any concerns they may have about safety issues.



LONE WORKER SAFETY POLICY TEMPLATE

[DOWNLOAD >](#)

HOW TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE LONE WORKER SAFETY PROGRAM

Lone Worker Risk Assessment Template

TASK	HAZARD	RISK FREQUENCY	RISK SEVERITY	RISK LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT STEPS TO MITIGATE?	COMPLETED BY:	DATE COMPLETED
<i>Read and service meters</i>	<i>Employee may be injured by physical violence from service users</i>	<i>Daily >6 hours</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Use wearable Blackline G7c monitoring device with 24/7 Live monitoring and emergency SOS</i>	<i>Health & Safety Manager</i>	<i>Jan 5, 2024</i>

HOW TO DRIVE SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM ADOPTION

Once you've got a lone worker safety policy in place, it will invariably involve changing how things are done in the workplace. That makes the management of change a core component to set your lone worker program up for success. That's even more so the case if it involves the introduction of technology— like the connected lone worker safety devices mentioned earlier.

Since new technology often involves asking individuals to do their jobs differently, or requires them to learn new skills, employees are greatly affected by these types of changes. It's critical to educate workers on the rationale for change, involve them in the decision-making process including the development of the lone worker policy, and give them the opportunity to pilot new equipment and procedures.

Five Steps for Successful Change Management

1. **ALIGN ON CHANGE APPROACH** – identifying the rationale for change (internal and external drivers) and impacted stakeholders, alongside how you will communicate and implement the change.
2. **VOCAL AND VISIBLE LEADERSHIP** – appointing an executive sponsor who is front and center socializing the change, surfacing resistance (like privacy concerns) and celebrating successes; front-line leader engagement also key.
3. **BUILD YOUR CHANGE NETWORK** – creating a coalition of ambassadors (representing various parts of the organization that will be impacted) who cheerlead, rally and inspire their coworkers to get excited about the change.
4. **INVEST IN IMPLEMENTATION** – outlining the onboarding and execution process, from account design, to training and testing, to go-live to ongoing support.
5. **CLOSE THE GAPS WITH DATA** – using evaluation methods such as post-training evaluations, employee surveys, and data from technology use are ways to measure and gather feedback on change adoption, acceptance and adequacy of support.



Want to dig deeper into change management?

[READ THE WHITEPAPER >](#)

LONE WORKER PROGRAM A MUST-HAVE TO GET IN FRONT OF RISK

Knowing who your lone workers are, assessing and mitigating the risks, and developing a comprehensive policy that clearly defines roles and accountabilities is critical to protect this growing and vulnerable segment of the workforce.

And it's not just a nice-to-have, but a must-have as legislation in this area evolves and becomes more rigorous globally.

The good news is that by equipping your organization with advanced monitoring technology, the right training and resources and putting a comprehensive safety program in place, swift action to get ahead of risk and keep your lone workers safe is possible.

The bottom line? Lone worker safety is a team effort and requires the participation and contribution of not just the workers themselves, but managers, leaders and the rest of the organization in order to be effective.

blacklinesafety.com



“With connected lone worker safety devices, CEMEX has benefitted from having that peace of mind – both on the management side and for our night drivers. We’ve got this system in place now, allowing us that level of comfort when people are working alone on sites. If there is a situation, within seconds we can see exactly where they are.”

Barrie A. Flitton Operations Manager, Logistics, CEMEX – a global leader in building solutions, with worksites across the world.

READY TO LEARN MORE?

Contact us to discover how we can introduce connected safety technology into your workplace.

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