

Code of Practice No. 15 Working Alone in Safety



Originated:	March 2002
Approved:	June 2021
Due for Review:	June 2024

1. DEFINITION

A Lone worker is defined as a Trust member of staff or a volunteer working on their own on the Trust's authorisation. Lone working also includes meeting somebody (including staff from partner organisations) away from his or her offices.

2. REGULATION

As lone working covers such a wide range of tasks it is covered by a range of different legislation. The most relevant is the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which sets down the requirement for a risk assessment to be carried out for every activity.

3. ASSESSMENT

Recently recruited volunteers, apprentices and trainees are potentially more vulnerable than other staff and this should be given consideration when undertaking a risk assessment or allocation lone working tasks. If an individual prefers not to work alone, the Trust will not require them to do so.

There is no general prohibition on working alone. As a rule, working alone should not in itself directly increase the likelihood of an accident happening. However, it may greatly increase the likelihood of an accident having a serious or fatal outcome through delay in the arrival of help or medical attention. When carrying out a risk assessment that includes lone working then consideration must also be given to any medical conditions that may affect an employee's / volunteers suitability to work alone.

As stated in Code of Practice 4 Occupational Health and Hygiene Promotion: "Existing employees are asked to inform the Trust of any new medical conditions or illnesses that may affect their ability to carry out their normal day to day tasks without compromising their health or the safety of others".

In carrying out a risk assessment for working alone on a particular project, specific questions should be asked, for example: Can equipment be handled by one person? Is the person medically fit? Does the workplace or the task place more of a risk on a solitary worker? Is the person competent to undertake the work?

A thorough risk assessment will ascertain whether the task being carried out is safe to be carried out by a lone worker.

No task should be assumed safe to be carried out by a lone worker, however the following list gives some

examples of activities that must NEVER be carried out by a lone worker:

- Use of power tools such as brushcutter and chainsaw (see Code of Practice No. 12 Practical Conservation)
- Felling trees larger than 8cm diameter at breast height
- Pond clearance
- Fires
- Working near cliffs, ponds or rivers, or on steep slopes (see Code of Practice No. 13 Safety in Fieldwork)
- Situations with aggressive people or animals
- Work in extreme weather conditions
- Using ladders more than 3m long
- Entry into confined spaces
- Entry into and initial survey of dilapidated buildings
- Work in boats

Lone practical work on nature reserves should only be carried out by staff or Honorary Reserve Managers and their appointed assistants, following the guidelines set down here.

If the risk assessment suggests that lone working is not appropriate, then an alternative must be found. If lone working is appropriate, then the lone worker should use the Trusts 'Buddy System'.

4. THE BUDDY SYSTEM

The Buddy System should be used for staff and volunteers working alone. It is not necessary to use the Buddy System for travel on public highways, on public transport, or for meetings at the premises of partner organisations. However Trust staff and volunteers can set up a buddy at anytime should they wish.

The full buddy system including information on how it should be used and emergency procedures are attached to this code of practice.

5. MOBILE TELEPHONES

Mobile telephones are essential to lone workers, however they must not be solely relied upon. The Trust requires anybody lone working to carry a mobile phone even if the lone working is taking place in an area with poor or no signal.

6. SATELLITE GPS MESSAGING

When working on the high fells or where the mobile phone signal is known to be poor, the GPS messaging equipment should be taken.

7. SUPERVISION

Although lone workers by definition cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still the Trust's duty to provide appropriate control of the work. Supervision complements information, instruction and training and helps to ensure that workers understand the risks associated with the work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. It can also provide guidance in situations of uncertainty. Employees or volunteers new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job which presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied at first. The extent of supervision required

should be part of the Risk Assessment. Safety supervision may take the form of periodic site visits and/or discussions in which safety issues are assessed.

8. VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

See Code of Practice No. 16 Dealing with Aggression at Work

8.1 Arranging meetings

Before meeting someone ensure you have their details (such as name, address, phone no) and check these by telephoning back to confirm arrangements if you are at all suspicious. Never attend a meeting with anyone who will not provide this information or whose identification you have not checked.

8.2 General

Employees who deal directly with the public may face aggression or violent behaviour. They may be sworn at, threatened or even attacked. In any situation where you feel threatened or at risk get away immediately and call the police if you feel you need to. Any incident must be reported to the Trust at the first opportunity.

If you find yourself in a threatening situation:

Stay calm, do not argue or be forced into further arguments

If you find yourself in a threatening situation:

- Do not respond aggressively - this will increase the chance of confrontation.
- Stay calm; speak slowly, gently and clearly. Do not argue or be forced into further arguments.
- Keep your eye on potential escape routes, keep yourself between the aggressor and the door and, if possible, behind a barrier such as a desk.
- Never turn your back. If you are leaving, move gradually backwards.
- Never remain alone with an actively violent person. Be prepared to move very quickly if necessary.

Never underestimate threats.

Appendix 1

The “Buddy System”

Step by step instructions for use.

This document should be used in conjunction with Code of Practice No. 15 Working Alone in Safety.

When to use this document

The Buddy System should be used for staff and volunteers working alone. It is not necessary to use the Buddy System for travel on public highways, on public transport, or for meetings at the premises of partner organisations. However Trust staff and volunteers can set up a buddy at anytime should they wish.

It is advisable to use a staff member as your buddy as they will be familiar with the buddy system and emergency plan. However if this is not possible due to the hours you are lone working then somebody else must be used. Volunteers can use either a partner or close friend. Never work alone without a buddy.

It is advisable for staff and volunteers using the Buddy System keep the full Buddy System document at home.

THE BUDDY FORM

The buddy form can be used by anybody based at Trust offices. The buddy form is in triplicate form in a book in the Admin Office.

The buddy form is for staff and volunteers based at Trust offices:

Any office based member of staff or volunteer can be a buddy, upon confirming your buddy you must complete a ‘buddy form’.

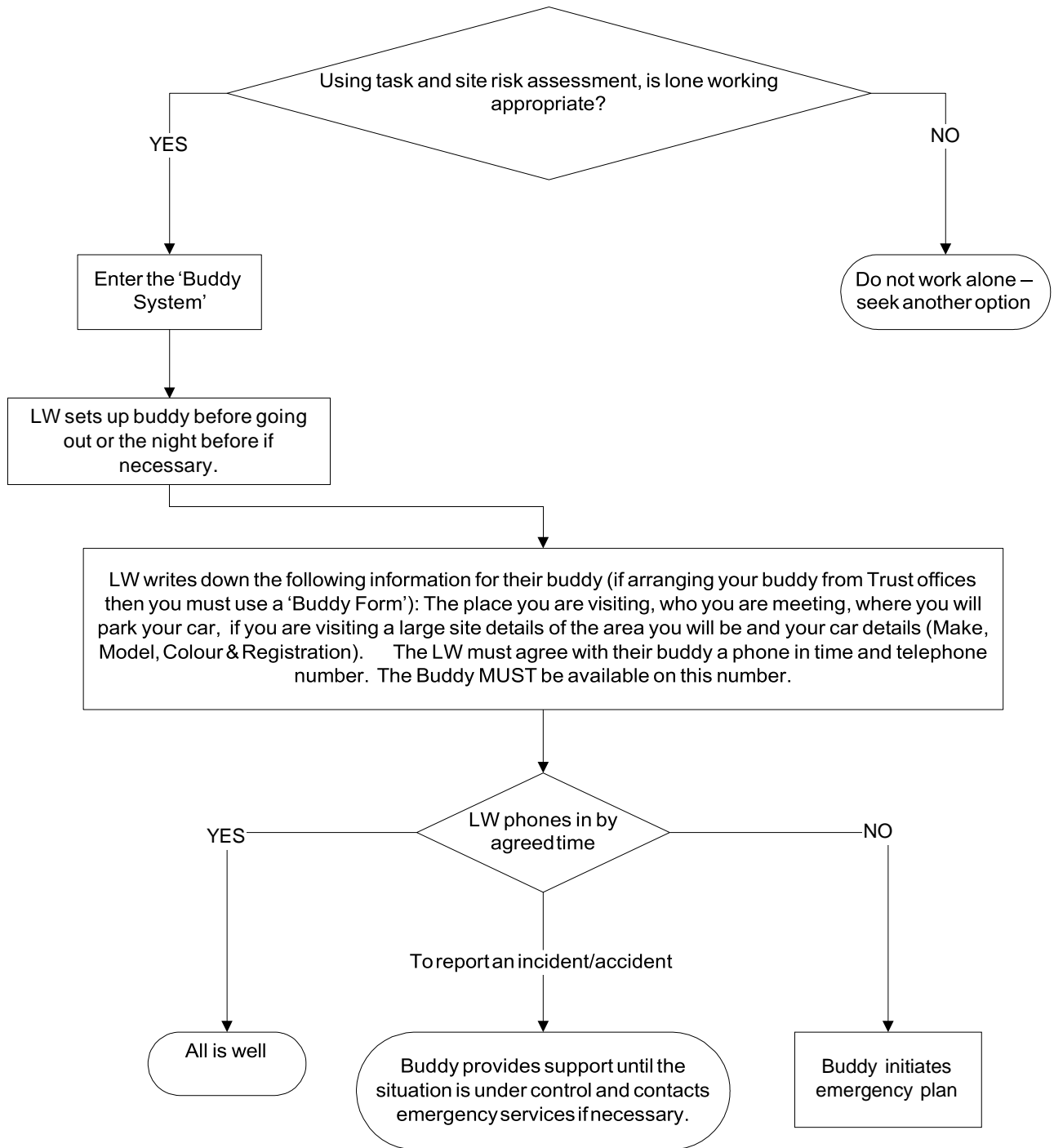
All the details asked for on the form must be provided. Your call in time must be agreed by both you and your buddy as well as the number you will call at your phone in time. If your call in time will be after office hours then you may agree to call your buddy on their mobile or home telephone number.

The buddy form is in triplicate. The top copy goes to your buddy, the second copy is taken by the lone worker to remind them to call in and the third copy remains in the book.

Never make the assumption somebody will be able to be you buddy, never leave a buddy form on somebody’s desk in the hope that they will pick it up.

KEY	
LW – Lone Worker	A Trust member of staff or a volunteer working on their own on the Trust’s direct authorisation or instructions away from Trust offices.
Buddy	Person who will remain by the phone to await contact from the LW and act as support to the LW should an accident or incident occur.
Support Team	Honorary Reserve Managers and other people who can be called upon to help in the case of an

Cumbria Wildlife Trust 'Buddy System'



The Buddy System Emergency Plan

