

Caistor Town Council Lone Working Policy



1. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures and responsibilities for staff who work alone, ensuring their safety and wellbeing while carrying out duties for Caistor Town Council. It applies to all lone working situations, including office-based, remote, and outdoor tasks, night working or low light working, vulnerable groups (young workers, women, new/expectant mothers, disabled individuals) and environments with potential for violence or criminal activity.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- The Town Clerk, who works alone in the Town Hall office and from home.
- The Estates Based Staff, who performs maintenance and repair tasks around the town, unsupervised but as directed by the Town Clerk.

3. Definition of Lone Working

Lone working refers to any situation where a staff member carries out duties without direct supervision or immediate support from colleagues. This includes:

- Working alone in the Town Hall office.
- Working from home.
- Performing outdoor or maintenance tasks alone.

4. Risk Assessment

Caistor Town Council will conduct regular risk assessments for lone working roles. These assessments will:

- Identify potential hazards (e.g. use of tools, working at height, isolation).
- Evaluate the likelihood and severity of risks.
- Recommend control measures to reduce risks.

5. Risk Evaluation for Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable groups would include young workers, women, new/expectant mothers, disabled individuals and might be subject to additional risks:

- Young workers – inexperience and poor hazard recognition could benefit from enhanced supervision, training, buddy systems.
- Women - increased risk of harassment or assault could benefit from GPS tracking, lone worker alarms.

- New/Expectant Mothers - fatigue, mobility issues, health complications could benefit from adjusted duties, regular health checks.
- Disabled Workers - accessibility, communication barriers could benefit from assistive tech, tailored emergency protocols.

6. Hazard Identification

Lone working maybe exposed to hazard whilst carrying out their contractual duties. These might include:

- Environmental hazards (poor lighting, slippery surfaces, remote locations).
- Health & Medical (Sudden illness, lack of first aid access)
- Violence & Crime (Aggressive individuals, theft, assault risks)
- Psychological (Isolation, stress, anxiety)
- Equipment & Manual Handling (Heavy lifting, machinery use without assistance)
- Travel & Transport (Vehicle breakdowns, accidents, poor mobile signal).

7. Activities that CAN and CANNOT be Undertaken Alone:

Activities That *Can* Be Undertaken Alone

These are typically low-risk, routine, or well-documented tasks:

- **Administrative duties:** Filing, data entry, scheduling, email correspondence
- **Routine inspections:** Visual checks of equipment or facilities (if no hazards are present)
- **Remote work:** Tasks performed from home or a safe, controlled environment
- **Training modules:** Online or self-paced learning programs
- **Basic maintenance:** Changing light bulbs, cleaning, restocking supplies
- **Travel:** Commuting to and from work (unless otherwise specified by company policy)
- **Creative work:** Writing, designing, planning, or brainstorming sessions

Activities That *Cannot* Be Undertaken Alone or which need a dynamic risk assessment prior to undertaking

These involve elevated risk, legal oversight, or require collaboration:

- **Working at height:** Use of ladders, scaffolding, or elevated platforms
- **Confined space entry:** Any task involving restricted or enclosed environments
- **Heavy machinery operation:** Forklifts, industrial equipment (currently not applicable)
- **Hazardous material handling:** Chemicals, biohazards, or flammable substances other than those whose risk assessment permits lone use.
- **Emergency response:** Fire drills, evacuations, or first aid situations
- **Client-facing conflict resolution:** Disputes, complaints, or sensitive negotiations

8. Night-Time / Low-Light Working

Night-time or low-light working environments pose unique risks that can significantly impact the safety and wellbeing of workers, and avoided when reasonably possible. Inadequate lighting can make it difficult to operate tools or machinery safely.

9. Responsibilities

Clerk

- Ensure the office is secure during lone working hours.
- Keep a mobile phone charged and accessible.
- Keep regular hours when working in the office and inform P&F if there is a significant change.
- Report any concerns or incidents to the Council Chair or designated Councillor.
- Maintain an up to date emergency number contact information.

Estates Based Staff

- Keep a charged mobile phone accessible at all times.
- Ensure you have access to emergency contact numbers.
- Follow safe working practices when using tools, ladders, and machinery.
- Wear appropriate PPE (e.g. gloves, goggles, ear protection).
- Maintain regular contact with the Clerk regarding location and tasks.
- Report any incidents, concerns, or near misses to the Clerk or Council Chair.
- Avoid hazardous tasks (e.g. working at height or with electricity) unless risk-assessed and approved. Review and follow the latest risk assessment relevant to your role.
- Avoid working alone after dark unless essential and pre-approved.

Council

- Provide training and guidance on lone working safety.
- Maintain emergency contact procedures.
- Ensure equipment used by the Handyman is regularly inspected and maintained.
- Monitor compliance and review the policy annually.

10. Control Measures

For the Clerk

- Carry a charged work mobile phone at all times.
- Ensure visibility from public areas is limited to prevent unwanted attention.
- Avoid inviting visitors into the office without prior arrangement.
- Keep external doors locked when alone and use spyholes for all access.

- Maintain confidentiality and secure sensitive documents when working from home.
- Avoid working late hours and overtime unless necessary. Take regular breaks and avoid extended periods of isolation.
- Complete basic first aid training and have suitable first aid kit readily available.

For Estates Based Staff

- Mobile or in person check in with the Clerk before starting work and after finishing.
- Wear appropriate PPE (gloves, goggles, ear protection, etc.), inspect tools and equipment before use.
- Carry a charged work mobile phone at all times.
- Avoid lone working in remote or poorly lit areas after dark.
- Use signage when working in public areas to alert passers-by.
- Ensure generator is used in a well-ventilated area to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.
- Complete basic first aid training and have suitable first aid kit readily available.

11. Emergency Procedures

- In case of emergency, staff should contact emergency services immediately.
- A list of CTC emergency contacts will be provided and reviewed regularly by the Clerk.
- All incidents must be reported to the Clerk and recorded in the incident log.

12. Mental & Emotional Wellbeing

- Take regular breaks to avoid fatigue or isolation.
- Schedule occasional check-ins with colleagues or supervisors.
- Keep a comfortable and ergonomic working setup (especially when working from home).
- Know how to access mental health support services if needed.

13. Documentation & Reporting

- Complete a brief log of daily tasks and locations, all records to be kept by line manager.
- Record any maintenance issues or hazards encountered
- Update risk assessments if new tasks or equipment are introduced
- Review and sign off on safety training annually

14. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or following any incident.
- Staff feedback to be considered in improving lone working practices and to be an agenda item for both the Estates and P&F Committee meetings.
- Risk assessments will be updated as roles or working environments change.

Assessors: Chairs of Personnel & Finance and Estates Committees

Review Date: 13th November 2025

Next Review Due: November 2027

Version: 1.3