



LONE WORKING



Aim

The aim of this guide is to provide Health and Safety information specifically relating to deer managers intending to work alone.

Introduction

Practical deer management activities may routinely require deer managers to work in isolated or remote situations, outwith normal working hours and without close or direct supervision. Activities may involve working in a single, fixed location such as a deer larder, or involve being mobile over a particular geographical area, and may also require handling potentially dangerous equipment.

In any of these circumstances, deer managers working alone would not be exposed to hazards different from those working in groups, it is the risk that differs, requiring assessment and control measures.

The particular risks faced by lone workers can differ from those faced by others. For example lone workers may be at greater risk from particular hazards which may include:

- ◆ accidents or emergencies;
- ◆ inadequate provision of or access to first aid treatment;

- ◆ sudden illnesses;
- ◆ equipment failure;
- ◆ public perception and understanding
- ◆ changeable and extreme weather conditions.

Lone Working and the Law

While there is no specific legal barrier to an individual working alone, the general duties of the The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW) and The Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999 (MHSW) still apply*. Whether lone working is considered legal and safe in individual circumstances, will depend on the findings of a risk assessment**.

Legal responsibilities of the employers of lone workers

Employers have a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees whilst they are at work. For further details see BPG Health & Safety Principles.

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act responsibilities cannot be transferred to employees who work alone or without close supervision. It

is the employer's duty to organise and control lone workers and clear limits should be set by the employer about what can and cannot be done. It is also the employer's duty to ensure that employees are competent to deal with any new or unusual situation that may arise.

- 1 All employers/self-employed must carry out a risk assessment**. This should be a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to employees and to any other persons affected by the work being undertaken.

The HSEI has produced a leaflet entitled Working Alone in Safety, which will assist those who employ or engage lone workers.

Legal responsibilities of the lone worker

- 1 Employees and those who are self-employed have a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work. Employees and contractors also have responsibilities to co-operate with their employers over safety matters.

Risk Assessment

If lone working is being considered the following key questions must be addressed in carrying out a risk assessment:

- ◆ Can a person working alone safely carry out the work?
- ◆ What control measures are needed to ensure the lone worker is at no more risk than if people were working together?

Some additional questions to consider are:

- ◆ Can the place of work be safely entered and exited alone?
- ◆ Can one person safely handle any necessary equipment, including essential operating controls?
- ◆ Is the individual medically, physically and mentally fit and suitable to work alone-even in light of foreseeable events? Seek medical advice if necessary.
- ◆ Is there equipment required to ensure staff can be contacted or can summon help if required?

- ◆ Is there a risk of violence?
- ◆ Are women or young workers especially at risk if they work alone?

Control Measures

The following control measures may be required to maximise the safety of lone worker:

- ◆ Training and use of appropriate equipment
- ◆ Supervision and monitoring
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Emergency Plans
- ◆ Alternative work arrangements

Training and equipment

Training is important for those lone working, particularly in relation to the safe use of equipment, first aid and emergency procedures relating to accidents, equipment failure or changes in weather condition. Training should be reviewed regularly and updated as required. Specifically, training in the use of sit-in and sit-on All Terrain Vehicles is important.

Lone workers need to have sufficient experience to understand any risks that may arise and the precautions they need to take.

Arrangements and training should also be considered for the following:

- ◆ Safe manual handling;
- ◆ Provision and use of suitable protective clothing (including protection against adverse weather conditions and emergency survival equipment);
- ◆ Provision and use of communication equipment and procedures;
- ◆ Provision of adequate rest.

Supervision and monitoring of lone workers

- 1 The employer must decide as to the level of supervision required (based on risk assessment), and it should not be left to employees or individuals to decide whether they require assistance.

- 2 Monitoring, reporting and emergency procedures should be put into place to enable an employer to answer the following questions.



Does a an experienced and competent manager/ supervisor know:

- Where the lone worker is?
- What the lone worker is doing?
- That the lone worker is safe throughout the working period?
- That the lone worker has returned safely?
- What to do if the lone worker is not where they should be or does not return when expected?

2 Regular contact, visits and consultation to identify any safety concerns should be planned with the lone worker.

2 Those who are self employed or involved in voluntary deer management and who intend to work alone should also put in place monitoring, reporting and emergency procedures to ensure that someone can answer the questions above.

Communication

2 Lone workers should have access to methods of communication appropriate for the geographical area and type of work they are doing. All communications equipment should be tested prior to use and properly maintained.

Mobile phones may not always provide adequate coverage so alternative methods such as radios or satellite phones should be considered. Other methods may include automatic warning devices which operate if specific signals are not received from the lone worker as well as devices designed to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Planning

Lone workers should be able to respond correctly to an emergency. A risk assessment should identify foreseeable events, and ensure that appropriate emergency procedures be put into place. Training in and periodic rehearsal and review of procedures is essential.

Procedures should also be in place to ensure that any incidents, including accidents and near-misses are recorded (see BPG Health & Safety). Incident records should be reviewed and procedures amended accordingly to minimise the risk of future incidents

Insurance

All those involved in lone working, whether as an employer, self-employed or voluntary deer manager should ensure that any insurance covers lone workers.

Alternative working arrangements

If it is not possible for control measures to be put in place for work to be done safely by one person, alternative arrangements providing help or back-up will have to be devised.

*See BPG Health & Safety Principles. ** See BPG Risk Assessment.

1. For further information regarding Health & Safety Issues and Risk Assessment contact Health & Safety Executive (<http://www.hse.gov.uk>). For further contact information see BPG Useful Contact.