



نظام الشارقة للسلامة والصحة المهنية
Occupational Safety & Health Sharjah

حكومة الشارقة
هيئة الوقاية والسلامة
Government of Sharjah
Prevention & Safety Authority



Code of Practice

Safety in Lone Working

OSHJ-CoP-29

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1 Introduction

Lone working is when employees are working by themselves without close or direct supervision, and without other people being present in the same place. The main risks for lone working employees are illness and injury, abuse or assault, or environmental dangers. The fact that they are unsupervised and alone makes them more vulnerable to the sorts of hazards that are more manageable where the employee is accompanied, or someone is available to call for help.

2 Purpose and Scope

This Code of Practice (CoP) has been developed to provide information to entities to assist them in complying with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah.

This Code of Practice (CoP) defines the minimum acceptable requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah, and entities can apply practices higher than, but not lower than those mentioned in this document, as they demonstrate the lowest acceptable level of compliance in the Emirate of Sharjah.

3 Definitions and Abbreviations

Entities:	Government Entities: Government departments, authorities or establishments and the like in the Emirate. Private Entities: Establishments, companies, enterprises and economic activities operating in the Emirate in general.
Risk:	Is the combination of likelihood of the hazard causing the loss and the severity of that loss (consequences).
Risk Assessment:	The systematic identification of workplace hazards and evaluation of the risks associated. This process takes existing control measures into account and identifies and recommends further control measures where required.
Hazard:	Anything that has the potential to cause harm or loss (injury, disease, ill-health, property damage etc).
Competence:	The combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply all of them to perform their work.
Lone Working Employees:	Employees who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Entity Responsibilities

- Identify employees that are working alone and are classed as lone working employees;
- Undertake a risk assessment, identifying lone working hazards, reduce risks and introduce adequate control measures;

- Have safe work procedures in place to ensure the safety and health of lone working employees;
- Ensure lone working employees have access to adequate welfare facilities;
- Have an emergency response procedure in place for incidents during lone working;
- Have a process in place to allow lone working employees to report emergencies and other incidents.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- Not endanger themselves or others;
- Follow precautionary control measures to ensure lone work activities are performed safely and without risk to health;
- Cooperate with the entity and receive safety information, instruction, supervision and training;
- Report any activity or defect relating to lone working which they know is likely to endanger the safety of themselves or that of any other person.

5 Requirements

The entity should identify where reasonably practicable, alternatives to lone working, or steps taken to reduce the amount of time spent working alone. The entity when planning safe working arrangements for lone working employees should consider the following, including but not limited to:

- Ensuring that they have no medical conditions which may make them unsuitable for working alone;
- Providing training where there is limited supervision to control, guide and assist in situations where employees have limited experience;
- Ensuring they are sufficiently experienced and understand the risks and precautions;
- Set the limits to what employees can and cannot do whilst working alone;
- Ensuring that the employees are competent to deal with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training.

Lone working, includes but not limited to:

- Working alone within premises;
- Working separately from other people on the same premises or outside normal working hours;
- Working away from the entity premises, including but not limited to:
 - Health and social care employees visiting members of the public in their homes;
 - An employee involved in construction, maintenance and repair including engineers, plant installation and cleaners;

- Engineers, assessors and delivery drivers of equipment and supplies who attend construction projects;
- Service employees, such as postal couriers, taxi drivers, engineers, real estate agents, and sales/service representatives visiting domestic and commercial premises;
- Delivery drivers including Heavy Goods Vehicle drivers and couriers using vans and bikes;
- Agricultural and gardening employees.

5.1 Risk Assessment

The entity should conduct a risk assessment to identify and evaluate the hazards and introduce effective control measures to reduce the risk to a lone working employee. Specific risks to lone working, include but not limited to:

- Violence;
- Physical or verbal abuse;
- Lack of supervision;
- Lack of welfare facilities;
- Incidents or emergencies arising from work activities;
- Sudden illness with no access to first aid or medical assistance.

The risk assessment should take into consideration the following factors, including but not limited to:

- Identifying the hazards present during the type of work activities being conducted at each lone working location;
- The equipment or materials being used;
- The length of time an employee will be lone working;
- Location of the work activities;
- The supervision and monitoring of lone working;
- Access to emergency services;
- Competency of the lone working employee;
- Communication process between the lone working employee and their supervisor;
- Identification of any employee with specific medical conditions, pre-existing physical conditions or the taking of certain medications.

Further information on identifying hazards and risk assessments can be found in OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control.

5.2 Supervision and Monitoring

The extent of the supervision and monitoring required will depend on the risks involved and the ability of employees to identify and deal with safety and health issues. There are some work activities where at least one other person may need to be present, such as confined space work where a supervisor or stand-by person will have to be present.

The level of supervision required should be based on the findings of risk assessment. The higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision and monitoring required.

Procedures should be put in place by the entity to monitor lone working to ensure employees remain safe, including but not limited to:

- Periodically visiting and observing a lone working employee;
- Regular contact and communication between the lone working employee and supervisor using either a communication aid;
- Devices designed to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency and which are operated manually or automatically by the absence of activity;
- Checking that an employee has returned to their base or home on completion of a lone working activity or task;
- Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them;
- Employees should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile employees should carry a first aid kit suitable for minor injuries.

6 Training

The entity should provide information and training on lone working in languages and in a format that employees understand. Training for employees performing lone working activities, include but not limited to:

- Significant hazards identified due to lone working;
- Procedures to ensure the safety and health of employees performing lone working activities;
- Procedures to cope with an emergency.

Periodic refresher training should be conducted to ensure employees competency is maintained, including but not limited to:

- Where training certification has expired;
- Where identified as part of a training needs analysis;
- Where risk assessment findings identify training as a measure to control risks;
- Where there is a change in legal requirements;
- Where incident investigation findings recommend refresher training.

The entity must record and maintain accurate training records of OSH training provided to employees.

Further information on training can be found in OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence.

7 Emergency Preparedness and Response

The entity should have an emergency plan for lone working in place and ensure that it is communicated frequently to all lone working employees, including but not limited to:

- Establishing and implementing emergency procedures for lone working;
- Access to first aid provisions and the ability to perform first aid on themselves.

Further information on first aid can be found in OSHJ-CoP-16 First Aid at Work

Further information on developing an emergency plan can be found in OSHJ-CoP-18: Emergency Preparedness and Response.

8 References

OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control

OSHJ-CoP-16: First Aid at Work

OSHJ-CoP-18: Emergency Preparedness and Response

OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence

9 Document Amendment Record

TITLE	Safety in Lone Working		
DOCUMENT AMENDMENT RECORD			
Version	Revision Date	Amendment Details	Pages Affected
1	15 SEP 2021	New Document	N/A
2	26 JUN 2024	The document changed from a guideline to a code of practice. The document code was changed from OSHJ-GL-09 to OSHJ-CoP-29.	3,6,7
2	26 JUN 2024	Risk Register Added	11
2	26 JUN 2024	Checklist Added	14

APPENDIX 1. Risk Register

Some manuals within Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System include a sample risk register as an advisory document that entities can emulate. The examples listed in this sample may not be directly applicable to every entity; however, they serve as illustrative cases to enhance understanding of the methods used to evaluate activities within the entity, potential risks, and possible consequences. The sample demonstrates how to assess risks by calculating their likelihood and consequences.

Some manuals present this sample to emphasize the importance of risk monitoring, evaluation, and the implementation of appropriate control measures. It is unacceptable for an auditor from the Prevention and Safety Authority to find any entity engaging in hazardous activities without a thorough risk assessment process. We can anticipate and prevent workplace risks, and the risk monitoring process is not complex. Therefore, this appendix aims to provide a sample that aids in the monitoring, evaluation, and implementation of control measures, monitoring residual risks, and defining tasks and responsibilities for managing hazards.

Every government entity or private establishment has its unique nature of work and environment, which contain risks specific to its operations. Hence, each entity should develop its monitoring procedures based on this appendix. We can develop more detailed assessment tools beyond what this sample presents. As stipulated by Executive Council Resolution No. (15) of 2021 regarding the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System, employers are required to identify all foreseeable workplace hazards, assess the risk of injury or illness to workers, and implement consistent preventive measures to ensure workers' safety, health, and well-being. The same resolution also holds employers responsible for their employees, contractors, visitors, and anyone affected by the employer's activities. Therefore, this sample recommends including these individuals in the risk assessment process.

Activity/task	Dangers	Consequences	Existing control measures	Risk			Additional control measures	Residual risks			Executing person	Administrator: Date:
				L	C	R		L	C	R-R		
Isolated work in remote locations	Injury or illness without quick help	Worsening of injuries or health risks	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Provide emergency communication devices, first aid training	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Inspections or maintenance in isolated areas	Attacks from animals or people	Physical injuries or life-threatening risks	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Carefully select work locations, provide personal defense training	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Isolated work near hazards	Exposure to hazards like falls or hazardous materials	Serious accidents possible	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Regular safety inspections of the site, train employees on personal safety	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Reporting in emergencies	Delayed response to emergencies	Critical time lost in handling emergencies	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Develop an effective and reliable emergency reporting system	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Travel to field sites	Road accidents, getting lost	Physical injuries, delays	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Provide safe driving training, use navigation systems	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Inspection at industrial sites	Exposure to chemicals and machinery	Poisoning, machinery-related injuries	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Use personal protective equipment, safety training	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Working in outdoor environments	Weather conditions such as heat or cold	Heatstroke, frostbite	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Provide appropriate protective clothing regular weather updates	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Sampling or data collection	Exposure to wildlife or infection	Bites, infections	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Implement infection prevention measures, provide biological safety equipment	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Staying in remote areas	Lack of medical and emergency services	Delays in receiving medical care	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Organize first aid courses, equip emergency kits	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]

APPENDIX 2. Checklist

The checklist is used by Prevention and Safety Authority to monitor compliance levels during audit and inspection operations; it is not intended for use by government entities or private establishments.

Every code of practice or guideline published by the Prevention and Safety Authority within the Sharjah occupational safety and health system contains requirements that employers in the Emirate of Sharjah must comply with. Each manual includes an inspection checklist that summarizes the essential items used by the SPSA auditor to verify that government entities or private establishments comply with the manual's requirements. Auditors can add additional essential items as necessary. The inspection checklist also includes a manual reference for each essential item, as well as a sample of acceptable compliance evidence for each item. The SPSA's auditor may request additional compliance evidence based on the item's condition, as well as the severity and potential impact of non-compliance.

The SPSA's auditor uses the inspection checklist to provide a comprehensive report on the entity's status. We will use the same checklist to monitor manual standard violations. Non-compliance with these standards constitutes a violation of Executive Council Resolution No. 15 of 2021 regarding the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System. If the SPSA's auditor detects non-compliance, they can issue violations based on the approved violation list.

In this manual, the SPSA provides information and standards that employers conducting activities in the Emirate of Sharjah must adhere to. This is to ensure the safety of workers, property, and the environment. Adhering to the requirements of this manual helps improve the level of occupational safety and health at the workplace, and it shields private establishments from potential violations or financial penalties for non-compliance.

The Emirate of Sharjah's Executive Council Resolution stipulates that employers must exercise due diligence to ensure the safety and health of workers, contractors, visitors, and all those affected by the employer's activities. To avoid non-compliance, employers must ensure adherence to the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System requirements. Entities should develop their procedures and inspection checklists according to their activities, nature of work, and risk level.

Depending on recorded or reported incidents, and as necessary, the SPSA may amend the requirements in this manual. As a result, the attached inspection checklist may change. Occupational safety and health practitioners must stay up-to-date on published standards and any changes to the inspection checklist attached to each manual.

Audit/Inspection Checklist

Code Title	Lone Working	Code No.	OSHJ-CoP-29	Rev. No.	2.0
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Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
1.	Are the risk associated with the lone working identified and assessed?	5.1: Risk Assessment	– Check risk assessment
2.	Are the lone workers properly monitored to ensure they remain safe?	5.2: Supervision and Monitoring	– Check the monitoring system.
3.	Are the concerned employees trained in the use, risk and safety measures related to lone working?	6: Training	– check training records
4.	Is there an emergency response plan for lone working?	7:Emergency Preparedness and Response	– Check ERP