



**LoneALERT**

**LONE WORKER PROTECTION SYSTEMS**

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE EXTRACT

*“The costs of not protecting lone workers”*

[WWW.LONEALERT.CO.UK](http://WWW.LONEALERT.CO.UK)

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## The Costs of Not Protecting Lone Workers

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Analysis of employment data provided by The Office of National Statistics 2009 suggests there are approximately 2.5 to 3.5 million lone workers currently employed in the UK. As well as risk to individuals, financial risk carried by an organisation is potentially huge and often left uncalculated internally. Financial risk is most likely to arise from legislation enforced by The HSE, risk of action under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act, litigation from staff that are not protected or cost of low-efficiencies due to time off, staff-churn and resultant business disruption. Fines levied can often run into tens or hundreds of thousands of pounds routinely, even prior to factoring-in private proceedings. Any organisation employing significant numbers of lone workers therefore carry a significant financial risk regardless of whether they operate in the private or public sector arena. The costs of inaction with respect to violence and accidents at work and the personal, monetary and organisational benefits of effective action to combat violence at work cannot be underestimated.

Undoubtedly these types of workers are exposed to an increased risk of verbal and physical assault, as well as being at greater risk of accidental injury where the emergency services are unavailable. 81% of Lone Workers are concerned about violence or aggression, whilst 56% of those in the NHS, Local Government and Housing Associations have experienced aggression at least once in their careers (approximately 10% of these experienced physical aggression). A third of community nurses have been assaulted or harassed in the last two years, with 6.2% suffering a physical attack. Clearly, Lone Workers are concerned about the threat of aggression during their working lives, with 22% of those who have regular contact with the public believing that they would be threatened in the next year and 10% expecting to be assaulted.<sup>1</sup>

These statistics suggest that workers would see the need to insist upon Lone Worker solutions from their employers. However, a great disparity has emerged amongst Lone Workers between the perceived level of danger and the demand for greater protection. Lone Workers often see their hidden, untested people skills as their main defence. Worryingly, it takes an actual incident to create a 'need' from the Lone Worker's perspective, but this would be far too late for the liable employer. Lone Workers may also be unaware of the potential solutions available. This means that the onus remains on employers and solutions vendors to institute measures to educate workers about safety and to work with them on appropriate solutions.

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<sup>1</sup> All statistics in this paragraph: Lone Worker Study within the NHS, Local Government and Housing Associations, Cambridge Resolution, 2005

**Costs can include:**

- Lost time
- Sick pay
- Damage or loss of product and raw materials
- Extra wages, overtime working and temporary labour
- Production delays
- Investigation time
- Costs of retraining
- Recruitment problems if the accident / incident was reported in the press
- Fines
- Losing key personnel due to injury or ill-health can be critical to meeting contract deadlines
- Legal costs.
- Loss of business reputation due to accidents and enforcement action can lead to loss of new or repeat business or loss of new investment
- Accidents can damage workforce morale and affect productivity

**Example costs for an injured worker who was hospitalized and off work for 12 weeks:**

Wages for injured worker over period	£10,000
Loss of production	£ 8,000
Overtime wages to cover lost production	£ 3,000
Wages for replacement worker	£ 7,000
Loss of time of manager / MD	£ 4,000
Legal expenses	£ 3,000
Fines and court costs	£ 4,000
Increase in employers liability insurance	£ 6,000
<b>Total cost to business</b>	<b>£45,000</b>

**Lone Working Case Law**

- **Ingram V Hereford & Worcester County Council - £203,000** Mr Ingram had to endure both physical and verbal abuse from those he encountered on a number of travellers' sites, this included having a dog set on him and being shot at. The case was based on the employer's alleged breach of duty of care to provide Mr Ingram with a safe system of work, resulting in his suffering prolonged and unremitting stress.
- **Jackie Collins – off-license - £179,000** Jackie Collins was involved in an armed robbery. The judge declared that lone working was a key factor in this case
- **Gamekeeper – rural location – employer fined £3000** In 2007, a Scottish gamekeeper had a quad bike accident and died because no one came to look for him for two days. His employer was fined £3000