

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND
WORKING ALONE POLICY**

DATE APPROVED: 14 April 2011	APPROVED BY: Board of NMI
IMPLEMENTATION DATE:	DIVISION RESPONSIBLE: SERVICES
DOCUMENT CODE:	VERSION NO: 001
NUMBER OF PAGES: 8	REVIEW DATE: 13 April 2014

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The National Museum of Ireland (NMI) recognises that employees work alone at certain times while on duty. Working alone or employees who work by themselves without close or direct supervision are found in a wide range of situations, within NMI. NMI recognises that

while there is no legal prohibition on working alone, there is a general duty in the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the 2007 General Applications and Regulations* on employers to provide where reasonably practicable a safe systems of work and a safe place of work for its employees.

2.0 Definition of Working Alone

NMI has defined working alone as, " *A person is working alone when that person works alone in any environment where there are no other workers present who have knowledge of the work and workplaces, and who are available to respond efficiently to unusual occurrence or imminent danger or emergencies*". Examples of working alone when undertaking NMI duties are listed in appendix 1. An employee to be classified as a lone worker does not have to be working for the duration of a whole working day; there may be short periods of the working day perhaps only 10 or 15 minutes when people are working alone.

3.0 Hazard Identification

Because of the nature of NMI's work it is necessary to consider the hazards for staff involved in working alone. Work involving the following hazards must not be carried out alone:

- Use of dangerous machinery and/or maintenance of such machinery
- Working with insufficient modes of communication
- Movement of cash, valuables and artefacts
- Working at heights or using ladders
- Work on or near live electrical or uninsulated conductors
- Work involving flammable liquids or gases, asphyxiants, toxic or corrosive substances
- Work in buildings with unstable floors/ceilings.

The specific nature and location of hazards shall be set out in the hazard and risk assessment undertaken by the relevant Line Manager before commencement of NMI work.

4.0 Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments should be carried out prior to all forms of work in accordance to the NMI Safety Statement that is available on Public Folders/NMI Services/Facilities/Health and Safety. If the Risk Assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or backup should be put in place. Where a lone worker is working at a workplace managed by another Line Manager, then that Line Manager will advise the lone worker of any risks and the control measures to be taken.

5.0 Lone Workers Responsibilities

NMI holds the main responsibility for protecting the health and safety of its staff that are working alone. Nonetheless, lone workers themselves have a responsibility to help the NMI fulfil this duty, so they must:

- Take reasonable care to look after their own health and safety
- Safeguard the health and safety of other people affected by their work
- Co-operate with their employer's health and safety procedures
- Use tools and other equipment properly, in accordance with any relevant safety instructions and training they have been given
- Not misuse equipment including equipment provided for their health and safety or other purposes.

6.0 NMI Responsibility for Lone Workers

NMI Line Managers shall identify each type of working alone activity that is carried out by staff in their department (including interns, volunteers and those on work experience) and ensure their staff are instructed and trained in the arrangements and control measures for working alone. They will ensure that all staff have the necessary skills required and adhere to the relevant code of conduct for field-based activities from respected organisations i.e. staff will obtain a safe pass where appropriate.

Line managers must ensure that the following NMI procedures for working alone are to be followed:

- The NMI employee who is working alone must make contact with their immediate supervisor prior to commencing work alone and on completion of work
- Line Managers will arrange the provision of mobile phones, from resources within their division/department for employees working alone if necessary. The NMI employee will be responsible for determining the areas of the worksite with poor radio reception and ensuring the mobile phone is checked and maintained at all times and is fully operational before commencing work alone. If the provision of a mobile phone is unavailable to a division/department other arrangements can be made through the Line Manager i.e. use own mobile phone with expenses paid at the discretion of the Line Manager
- Line Managers will ensure first-aid boxes and qualified first-aiders are located in the NMI work area where practical, portable first-aid boxes (available through the Facilities Manager) should be located in vehicles where people work off site
- NMI employees will ensure use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where it is needed
- Line Managers will ensure emergency contact numbers are available and posted for first-aiders and emergency personnel in each NMI work area. Lists are available at all NMI main receptions and by contacting Senior Attendants
- The onus is on NMI employees will ensure they have the appropriate licence and insurance to drive vehicles they use for work purposes, including trailers

- NMI employees should consult with their Line Manager when potentially hazardous situations arise and, in particular, where these activities are beyond the training levels of the employee (employee must not decide course of action, if contact is not made with their Line Manager they must seek advice from a more Senior Manager)
- NMI employees must promptly report incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses to their Line Manager, and Line Managers must ensure these reports are fully investigated.

7.0 Conclusion

If difficulties arise with the implementation of these procedures, between an employee and his/her Line Manager, the NMI Health and Safety Manager (Facilities Manager) can be requested to advice. This policy will be reviewed by NMI every three years.

Appendix 1 Examples of Working Alone

Below are some examples of when NMI employees might work alone:

- Driving vehicles
- Working on or visiting building sites/excavations
- Working on or visiting active farms
- Working in remote areas/hills/bogs/quarry faces/islands/lakes/at sea
- Hill walking/rock climbing
- Caving/working in mines
- Working near live animals
- Working with or near dead animals
- Working in boats
- Working with water
- Swimming/scuba diving
- Using equipment outdoors (e.g. geological hammers, specimen traps)
- Working alone in a specific NMI site

Appendix 2 Further Relevant Information

An example of further information available online from the Health and Safety Authority that may be useful to staff at NMI is listed below. This and other information can be found at http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications.

Chemical and Hazardous Substances

- [Export and Import of Dangerous Chemicals](#) Year : 2009
- [Legionnaires Disease Information Sheet](#) Year : 2008
- [Carbon Monoxide Information Sheet](#) Year : 2008
- [Safety with Asbestos Information Sheet](#) Year : 2007
- [2007 COP for the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Chemical Agents Regulations 2001 SI No 619 of 2001](#) Year : 2007
- [Use Chemicals Safely](#) Year : 2007
- [Short Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Chemical Agents Regulations, 2001](#) Year : 2004
- [Guidelines to the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Chemical Agents Regulations 2001](#) Year : 2004

Mines and Quarries

- [Safe Quarry - Guidelines to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work \(Quarry\) Regulations 2008](#) Year : 2008
- [Guidance For Carrying Out Risk Assessment at Surface Mining Operations](#) Year : 2002
- [Guidance to Ensure Safe Use of Large Vehicles and Earth-moving Equipment in Quarries](#) Year : 2002
- [Guidance on the Safe Use of Explosives in Quarries](#) Year : 2001

Safety and Health Management

- [Employees with Disabilities](#) Year : 2009
- [ESB Code of Practice for Avoiding Danger from Overhead Electricity Lines](#) Year : 2008
- [Using Ladders Safely - Information Sheet](#) Year : 2007
- [Guidelines on Risk Assessments and Safety Statements](#) Year : 2006
- [Workplace Safety and Health Management](#) Year : 2006

Health

- [Guidelines on Occupational Dermatitis](#) Year : 2009
- [Response of the Health and Safety Authority to the Workplace Health and Well-Being Strategy Report of Expert Group](#) Year : 2008
- [Workplace Health and Well-Being Strategy](#) Year : 2008
- [Guidelines on Occupational Asthma](#) Year : 2008
- [Guidelines on First Aid at Places of Work 2008](#) Year : 2008
- [A Review of the Occupational Diseases Reporting System in the Republic of Ireland](#) Year : 2008
- [Caring with Minimal Lifting](#) Year : 2007

- Guidelines on Hearing Checks and Audiometry Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Control of Noise at Work Year : 2007

General Application Regulations

- Protection of Pregnant, Post Natal and Breastfeeding Employees Year : 2007
- Explosive Atmospheres at Places of Work Year : 2007
- First-Aid Year : 2007
- Night Work and Shift Work Year : 2007
- Protection of Children and Young Persons Year : 2007
- Control of Noise Year : 2007
- Work at Height Year : 2007
- Electricity Year : 2007
- Safety Signs at Places of Work Year : 2007

Recent Publications

- Guidance on the New Manual Handling Training System Year : 2009
- Employees with Disabilities Year : 2009
- Summary of Workplace Injury, Illness and Fatality Statistics 2007-08 Year : 2009
- Explosives in Construction Year : 2009
- Understanding Construction Risk Assessment Year : 2009
- Export and Import of Dangerous Chemicals Year : 2009
- NMI Annual Report 2008 Year : 2009
- NMI Annual Report 2009 Year : 2010