

Working alone safely

Purpose:

To promote ways to stay safe and well when working alone and reduce risks to safety.

Why:

Staying safe when working alone is crucial to prevent accidents and injuries and ensure you get help in case of emergencies.

TIAH Capability Framework area:

This aligns with the knowledge and skills in the Health and Safety area.

<https://tiah.org/tiah-capability-framework>

Talk leader instructions:

- Prepare to do the talk in a suitable/quiet location with no distractions
- Consider using some of the resources as part of the talk, e.g., showing a video
- Engage with participants, ask questions and give everyday examples
- Conclude with a brief review
- Get everyone to sign the form. Make sure to write the name of the farm and the date. Keep a copy in your Health and Safety records
- Ensure all participants have access to a copy of this document to refer to once the session has finished. This could be electronic and emailed or printed

Notes:

Background

While working alone can be common in farming and horticulture, it's essential to prioritise safety to prevent accidents and ensure everyone returns home safely at the end of the day.

It's also important to stay connected to others if you're working alone for long periods for your mental wellbeing.

Main learning points



Do a risk assessment:

Before starting any task, do a risk assessment. Identify potential hazards and implement control measures to mitigate risks.

Consider the type of work, location, weather conditions, and any other factors that may impact your safety.

The FCN/Agrii lone working downloadable checklist acts as a guide to risk assessments on the farm <https://farmwell.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/Lone-working-checklist.pdf>

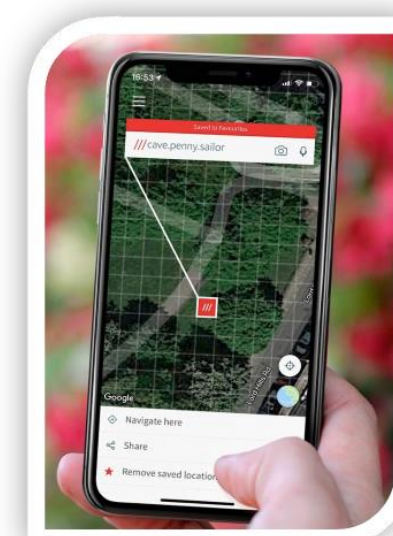
Communication:

Always let someone know where you're working and for how long. Share your location and expected return time with a colleague, friend, or family member.

Carry a fully charged mobile phone and ensure there's network coverage in your working area or, alternatively, a two-way radio/walkie-talkie.

If you're working in a remote location, consider using the 'what3words' App in case you need to communicate your exact location in an emergency <https://what3words.com>

Lone worker apps are another option to provide workers with real-time monitoring, emergency response capabilities, and location tracking. Make sure it comes with an automatic Low Signal Mode, which means that lone workers are protected even in areas with limited connectivity.



Emergency Procedures:

Familiarise yourself with emergency procedures and ensure you have a basic first aid kit readily available.

Know the location of the nearest hospital or emergency services contact number.

Use of Machinery:

When working with machinery, follow all safety guidelines and ensure you are trained and competent to operate the equipment.

Regularly inspect and maintain machinery to prevent breakdowns and accidents.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Wear appropriate PPE for the task at hand, whether it's gloves, boots, eye protection, or hearing protection.

PPE can provide an additional layer of protection in case of an accident.

Notes:

Suggestions/ ideas:

Weather Conditions:

Be aware of weather conditions and how they can affect your work. Extreme weather, such as high winds or heavy rain, can increase the risk of accidents.

Training and Competency:

Make sure you're adequately trained and competent to carry out the tasks assigned to you and let your supervisor/ manager know if you're not sure about anything.

Stay informed about the latest safety practices and updates in the agricultural and horticultural industry.

Discussion points



Q. What situations require you to work alone?

Q. What might you do if the weather is bad and you're going to work alone?

Responses might include:

- Do a risk assessment, plan the work schedule accordingly, and if conditions become hazardous, consider postponing the task
- If you decide to go ahead, let someone know where you are working and for how long
- Carry a fully charged mobile phone or two-way radio if reception is poor

Q. What can help keep you from feeling isolated and alone if you're working for long periods on your own?

Take regular breaks, stay connected with colleagues, and seek support if you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed.

Working alone can be isolating, and it's essential to prioritise your mental wellbeing.

Q. What will you do if contractors and other third parties come onto the site and will be working alone?

Q. What specific risks are on our site that you should inform contractors about (if any)?

If there are lone workers coming onto the site, for example, harvesting contractors, delivery drivers, vets, mechanics, etc., you must inform them of any risks and the control measures, e.g., informing harvesting contractors where overhead power lines that may pose a risk are.

Q. Are there any other risks you can think of that relate to working alone you'd like to talk about?

Summary/Wrap-up



1. **Communicate:** Inform someone about your location and tasks and establish regular check-ins. Make sure you have your mobile phone or another device to communicate with.
2. **Emergency preparedness:** Have a first aid kit, emergency contacts, and knowledge of nearby medical facilities.
3. **Machinery safety:** Follow proper protocols for using equipment, wear appropriate PPE, and perform regular equipment/ machinery checks.
4. **Environmental awareness:** Be mindful of weather conditions, terrain, and potential hazards to minimise risks.
5. **Personal safety practices:** Use proper lifting techniques, stay hydrated, stay connected to others and take breaks to avoid fatigue-related accidents.

Resources:

HSE: Protecting lone workers How to manage the risks of working alone:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>

HSE: Working alone Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working:

<https://farmwell.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/HSE-working-alone-on-the-farm.pdf>

Lone working - The basics for employers:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/>

NFU Lone Working on Farms Guidelines:

<https://www.nfuonline.com/archive?treeid=14755>

Mind, For support on Mental Health:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Toolbox Talk participants

Toolbox Talk: **Working alone safely**

Name of farm Date

Talk leader name.....

Name	Signature	Date