

LONE WORKERS' SAFETY



SAFETY
FIRST

A MONTHLY SAFETY TOPIC
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INTRODUCTION

In this handout, we will cover the topic of lone workers in the vacation rental industry. Lone workers are individuals who work alone and cannot be seen or heard by another person. They may be driving, traveling alone, or working in locations such as warehouses, laundry rooms, or inspecting properties. In this industry, housekeepers, maintenance workers, and inspectors are considered lone workers.

Lone workers are at a higher risk of injury or illness, and there are over 20 million lone workers in the US alone. This number has likely increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to more remote work and a reduction in staffing.

Why is lone worker safety significant? Lone workers are potentially more at risk of injury, and if injured, there is no one to call for assistance. This is particularly concerning in the vacation rental industry where a housekeeper may clean a house and no one will come by for hours to inspect the property.

What is a lone worker?

A lone worker is a person who works alone, or cannot be seen or heard by another person. This could include driving or traveling alone, maintenance workers, inspectors, and housekeepers.

Lone workers are potentially more at risk of injury or illness, and in the absence of other workers, they may not receive the necessary medical attention. In traditional workplaces, colleagues or supervisors can identify potential health risks and intervene before an incident occurs.

However, in the case of lone workers, this is not always possible. In the vacation rental industry, housekeepers, maintenance workers, and inspectors are at risk due to the nature of their work. Housekeepers clean properties and are often alone while doing so. Maintenance workers and inspectors must inspect properties and identify potential safety hazards, which may put them at risk.

Potential Risks and Safeguarding Approaches

Potential risk	Safeguarding approach
 Physical assault	Develop a lone worker policy with self-defense training, communication devices, and emergency protocols for help.
 Accidents or medical emergencies	Provide first aid and medical training, first aid kits, and emergency response services to lone workers.
 Exposure to hazardous materials or unsafe work environments	Provide PPE, such as respirators and protective clothing, and training on handling hazardous materials and emergency response protocols.
 Fatigue, stress, and mental health issues	Ensure regular breaks, access to mental health resources, and communication with supervisors or colleagues.
 Transportation-related risks	Develop procedures for travel planning, safe vehicles, and regular communication and check-ins with supervisors or colleagues.
 Environmental risks	Provide appropriate PPE, training on emergency response protocols, and establish communication protocols for checking in and getting assistance in case of emergency.
 Inadequate training and supervision	Provide thorough training and ongoing supervision, regular performance reviews and feedback, and access to support and guidance when needed.

CONCLUSION

The vacation rental industry has a high number of lone workers, which puts them at a higher risk of injury or illness. To safeguard these workers, companies can implement various measures, including the use of technology, employing a check-in policy, and sending two people out on important tasks. While there are costs associated with these measures, the cost of not safeguarding lone workers can be much higher. Therefore, it is essential for companies in the vacation rental industry to prioritize the safety of their lone workers and take steps to keep them safe.