

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Personal Safety (Lone Working)



SoLO
Life
Opportunities

38 Walnut Close,
Chelmsley Wood,
Birmingham,
B37 7PU

Charity No. 1102297
England Company No.
5025939

Category: staff and volunteers

Introduction

SoLO Life Opportunities is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its stakeholders.

Policy Statement

This policy covers any employee or volunteer who:

Works in any situation in which the ability to summon assistance may be impaired.

SoLO Life Opportunities recognises that, in carrying out the functions of the organisation, there are many occasions when personnel are placed in vulnerable situations. This policy aims to ensure that The Board, managers, employees and volunteers recognise this and take all reasonable steps to ensure the Health and Safety of workers or volunteers in isolated situations.

Who is responsible for safety

The primary responsibility for safety at work is with the employer. However, the employee has also a joint responsibility for ensuring his or her own safety at work and must work within the organisation's policies, procedures and practices. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 outlines a duty of care that is required by the employer to the employee. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999 outlines that employers have an explicit duty to carry out a risk assessment and identify risks and any changes that are necessary. They must follow up risk assessments with appropriate preventative and protective measures and management arrangements. Employers must also give employees adequate information and training. This should enable employees to understand the risks and measures taken by the organisation to reduce those risks identified.

In the case of a supported volunteer working on the project (they will be in this role either because they are young, aged 16-18, or they have a moderate learning disability) there is a responsibility on the organisation to ensure that the placement is risk assessed and the level of support is appropriate for the volunteer.

Training

To ensure that this policy is put into practice, training will be given, where appropriate, to all personnel including:

- Paid employees – including sessional workers
- Cleaners
- Particularly, those working in a situation offering support on a one to one basis.

Training will also be given to the following personnel, as part of their overall induction training:

- Volunteers and Board members whose role may result in them being in a position where they have an impaired ability to summon assistance.

The content of training will include:

- Techniques for defusing and resolving conflict
- The SoLO policy on personal safety
- Access to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust materials
<http://www.suzylamplugh.org/>

And be relevant to the role of the person(s) being trained.

Those giving the training should be competent to deliver the material and be up-to-date in their practice.

Reporting

SoLO Life Opportunities encourages that all incidents are noted and reported where appropriate. Staff and volunteers will be empowered to report incidents, however insignificant they may appear, to ensure that they are confident to deliver the service and feel safe.

All significant incidents (e.g. those that result in either physical or psychological harm) should be reported using SoLO Life Opportunities' generic incident reporting form available from managers. It is vital to the prevention of future similar incidents that the risks are fully investigated and procedures altered if appropriate.

Aftercare

SoLO Life Opportunities is committed to ensure that all staff and volunteers are supported at the time of the incident and after the incident.

Therefore, staff or volunteers involved in an incident will be given full and appropriate aftercare that may include:

- Emotional support that is empathic and non-judgemental and is short-term or long-term. It may include supporting the staff member or volunteer to access counselling.
- Practical support such as time off work, transport home or to hospital, replacement of belongings lost (if deemed appropriate and within our insurance cover), assistance in reporting the incident to the police.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and following any incident that may require the organisation to re-consider some of its procedures or in conjunction with any change in service delivery that may impact on the personal safety of those involved.

Linked with: Personal Safety Procedures (Appendix)

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Appendix

Personal Safety Procedures (Lone Working)



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To be read and used in conjunction with Personal Safety Policy

Risks and guidelines to prevention

It is important for individuals to help themselves by planning for their personal safety. Recognising potential risks and taking mitigating action is essential.

These procedures are guidelines for staff and volunteers to use to ensure their own personal safety. The procedures outline some of the risks that may be involved in delivering SoLO Projects and gives advice on how to ensure the individual's personal safety.

SoLO also undertakes to provide equipment (where appropriate), training and support to ensure individuals can reasonably protect themselves.

Visitors to SoLO premises or attending a SoLO function

It is important that our visitors are also kept safe whilst taking part in any of SoLO's activities. Therefore, wherever possible, staff and volunteers should ensure that visitors are not left unattended in a vulnerable situation. In particular, children who are accompanying adults on a SoLO activity or visiting SoLO's premises **must not** be left unattended for any reason.

Within both Walnut Close and the Fire Station, there is a reception area where visitors can be safely accommodated whilst the nature of their visit is explored and dealt with.

Procedures for off site visits

In situations where staff or volunteers are travelling to an activity, they should consider the following guidelines (given by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust)

P.L.A.N. for your personal safety

Prepare yourself: Know where you are going and how to get there. Familiarise yourself with the organisation's policies and procedures regarding violence and aggression within your office and whilst out and about.

Look Confident. Be alert, walk tall, keep your head up, be aware of your surroundings. Know where you are going and how to get there. Maintain a good posture, stamina and strength are aids to self-protection.

Avoid Risk. When going out from the workplace, leave details, in writing, of your movements and when you expect to be back. If you are leaving from home (not the workplace), leave your details with another person who will be aware if you have not returned. If you change your plans, let your workplace know. If anything seems dubious, call back to base first, to check. Avoid dangerous short cuts and walk facing the traffic on the street-side of the pavement. After dark, take a licensed taxi if necessary. If you feel at risk, don't go any further, turn around and go home.

Whether you are within your workplace or out and about, assess the potential risk of a situation. It is not weak to walk away from violence. Meeting confrontation in an aggressive manner is likely to be unsafe. Your aim should always be to get away fast.

Never assume that it won't happen to you or your fears are unfounded, sometimes people are what they seem.

Procedures for travelling

(n.b. in this context, the term children generally refers to those under 16 years of age)

Risks/ Concerns	Policy/Safe Working Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attack in taxi/public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal alarm• Mobile• Always use reputable, known taxi companies• When ordering taxi, leave your name, wait for driver to identify you before getting in.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member who is angry/emotional/unpredictable with dangerous implement • Personal/office property being stolen • Children getting out of car, hitting, kicking etc whilst travelling • Asked to transport unescorted child or young person in car or taxi – risk is accusation of child abuse or inappropriate conduct,. • Escorted children left in car with driver whilst escort takes another child to house • Getting lost and/or parking, Looking for homes in dark • Breaking down • Car jacking, Begging • Walking to and from car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffusing/resolving training • Be confident • Feel okay to leave • Not on show/out of sight/locked away. • Clear policy, children never on own/without appropriate car seats • Always get children out on the pavement side of the road. • Assess the risk (eg look at other situations in which child travels) and obtain written parental consent if behaviour of young person is not a concern. • Driver DBS checked and reference checked. Parents encouraged to come out to vehicle. • Children should not ride in front of minibus • If dark, put interior light on, keep in sight of house, wherever possible. • Time allowed, organisation/planning, be prepared • Breakdown cover • Personal responsibility for contact number for help and assistance. • Doors locked and windows shut • Security lighting, torch
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident/fire • Stressed by dealing with situations or phone calls – feeling isolated • Threats from outside/environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that you know the procedures for fire • Signing in/out • Regular check of office environment for safety issues • Train staff in fire procedure • Risk assess job you are doing – can it be done with others around? • Sharing personal phone nos.– not to be misused • Buddy system • Off-loading systems – ok to do this out of hours – to On call Person as first line of contact. • Phone police
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**Procedures for home visits (or to other offices)
Be properly equipped – take a torch if travelling at night**

Risks/concerns	Policy/Safe Working Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abduction or violence against employee/volunteer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confident – not nervous or aggressive • Keep assessing the situation – trust your instincts • Leave the situation immediately if you start to feel uncomfortable • Always check for a quick exit route and sit near the door • Use a buddy to tell where you are going, when you will be back, leave contact number. Buddy to phone you if you have not returned within 30 minutes of the time you have given. Keep in touch if you are

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals present in house • Not met by the person you were expecting (eg met by person of opposite sex, met by a group) and this makes you feel uncomfortable • Asked to deal with something that is not in your remit or which you find very difficult to handle • Physical environment in the home is unsafe or such that you are unable to do your job • New Family – not known to organisation 	<p>on a series of visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put contact details of where you are going on your google calendar • Dress appropriately – are you giving the right message • Ask before visiting that animals are secured. Do not enter home if this has not been done. • Have an excuse ready (eg just had an urgent family call, sorry I can't stay, will make another arrangement) and leave the situation. • Tell person that you will need to pass on to or involve another person • Arrange to meet at a different location • Assess situation and take someone with you if deemed appropriate • Carry out first meeting at public place or in office.
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Procedures for when supporting a member (e.g. taking them home in your car)

When working alone, it is important that you know the procedures for what to do in an incident. When working alone, or with a member, it is recommended that staff or volunteers have a mobile phone on their person.

Risks/concerns	Policy/Safe Working Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> member may act in an unpredictable manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all the correct risk assessments have been carried out – report any changes in behaviour immediately. Ensure that you have the member’s contact details with you, drive to a well-lit, busy area, contact the parents or carers. If you have any concerns, before the journey, do not attempt to take the member home – call the parents or carers. Informal on-call if you need immediate support/advice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> member is taken ill on journey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that you are aware of any medical problems that may occur. Ensure that you have the up to date contact details of the project leader and members parents or carers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> breakdown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that you have project leader and members contact details at hand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting lost on way to project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that you know, beforehand where you are going and how to get there. Ensure that you have the project leader’s contact details on hand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting lost on way back home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that you know, beforehand where you are going and how to get there.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that you have the project leader's contact details on hand. • Try to visit the members home before hand during day light hours to familiarise yourself with route.
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Extra safety tips:

Every time you set out on a journey

- DO** Look at a map/SATNAV, plan your route and write down some directions if you are going somewhere new or unfamiliar.
- DO** Keep a map/SATNAV handy so that you don't need to ask directions.
- DO** Let someone know where you are going or leave details in an obvious place (i.e. Google Calendar) , including the time you expect to arrive
- DO** Check you have enough fuel before making any journey, however short.
- DO** Check the oil and tyres and think through what you would do if you had to change a tyre, especially if you are going a long way.
- DO** Check that your breakdown organisation membership is up to date and keep the number handy - or become a member of one.
- DO** ensure you have a mobile phone with you to call for help in case of emergencies (remember, do not use your phone while driving).

Keep your "car kit" fully stocked

Every motorist should ensure they have a few basics in the car in case of emergencies.

Below is a list of things that are advisable:

- Extra petrol in a safety-approved petrol can
- Ice scraper/de-icer aerosol
- First aid kit
- A torch and spare battery
- Puncture kit
- Coins, phone card or mobile phone (with batteries charged up) for emergencies (be aware that it is illegal and dangerous to use a mobile phone whilst driving - If you have to make an urgent call, ensure you have parked in a safe place.)
- Shriek alarm to give off an extremely loud ear-piercing shriek to disorientate any aggressor
- Pen and paper (to record incidents and write down numbers)
- Emergency card with name (but not address), date of birth, blood group, allergies and emergency contact number
- Details of breakdown service membership

Setting off

- Keep anything of value, such as bags or mobile phones out of sight - they make easy pickings for a snatch thief in stop-go traffic, especially if left on the front passenger seat.
- Lock the doors whenever you are in the car. If you are in an accident, windows can easily be broken to get you out. You are much safer driving along with the doors locked.
- Keep windows closed in busy areas and use the sun roof or fan for ventilation.

Feeling threatened while driving?

It is possible that while driving you may feel threatened. Modern phenomena such as road rage and car jacking, while high profile in the media, are thankfully still rare. However, these tips may help to avoid the more dangerous consequences of these potential on-the-road threats:

- If you think you are being followed you may find yourself clutching the wheel and finding it difficult to breathe. Breathe out slowly, release the tension in your hands, arms and shoulders. Hold the wheel hard again and once more let go and sigh. As you relax, you can begin to think clearly.
- Keep driving until you come to a busy place such as a police, fire or ambulance station or a pub or garage forecourt.
- If a car pulls up alongside you and the occupants try to attract your attention, ignore them and don't make eye contact.
- If you see an accident or someone tries to flag you down, ask yourself if it is genuine and if you could really help - it might be best to drive on to the nearest phone or police station.
- If another driver is causing you concern, a mobile phone, or even a toy phone, is an excellent way to put off unwanted attention. Phone, or pretend to phone the police, and make an obvious note of the registration number of the car. There is a good chance they will stop pestering you if they think they will get caught.
- If a car pulls in front of you and forces you to stop, never switch off the engine. Stay calm and ensure all your doors and windows are locked. If the driver leaves his car to approach you, reverse as far as you can while continually sounding the horn and activating your hazard lights.
- If someone tries to force down a window, hit their hand with anything available and drive off carefully.

What happens if I break down?

- Pull as far off the road as you can and switch on your hazard lights.
- Use your mobile phone, or walk to the nearest phone and call your breakdown organisation or the police.

If you break down on the MOTORWAY

- Drive to an emergency phone if you can, stopping with the front passenger door as close to the phone as possible.
- If you cannot drive any further, a marker post every 100 metres will point you to the nearest phone. They are situated every 1000 metres.
- Be ready to tell the person who answers: the number on the marker; your car registration; and the name of your motoring organisation.
- Never cross the carriageway to reach a closer phone.
- Switch on your hazard lights.
- If you have children with you, make sure they are safe - do not leave them in the car by themselves.
- The call is free from emergency phones. Stand behind the phone and watch out for passing traffic, or anyone approaching you. Lift the handset and the phone will connect with the police control centre - they will know where you are.
- If you are a woman on your own, let the police know
- If someone stops, use the phone to let the police know and give them the registration number of the car which is stopping. Tell the driver you have given all the details to the police and that they are likely to arrive shortly.
- 10% of all motorway accidents involve a collision with a vehicle on the hard shoulder, so make a decision whether to stay in the car or stand on the verge, depending on how safe you personally feel outside the car.
- If you decide to stand on the verge, take your keys with you and lock all the doors except the passenger door, which you should leave wide open, so you can get in it quickly if you need to.
- When help arrives, check that the breakdown person knows your name and has been sent to help you specifically.

Personal Safety & Parking Your Car

- Avoid poorly lit car parks.
- Whenever possible, choose a manned car park and park as close as you can to the attendant.
- Reverse into the space. Hide away all valuables and obvious possessions.
- Make sure the interior light is working. Shut all windows. Lock all doors. Note exactly where you have parked your car.
- If you collect a ticket on entering the car park, do not leave it in the car, as this will make it easier for a thief to steal your vehicle.
- When returning to your car, have your keys ready so that you can get in quickly.
- Before entering scan the back seat to check no-one has climbed in.
- Once you are in the car lock the doors immediately and drive off quickly.

- **Doors** - Lock them every time you leave your car.
- **Windows** - Close all windows. Etch an identification number on all windows, headlamps and sunroof.
- **Ignition Keys** - Remove your ignition key on every occasion you leave your vehicle. Invest in security devices to help prevent or detect any criminal activity.
- **Stereos** - Security code your stereo equipment. Fit a security device or have a detachable unit.
- **Documents** - Never leave vehicle documents in your car. Your registration document, MOT and insurance certificate will help the thief sell your vehicle.
- **Luggage and Valuables** - Do not leave any luggage or valuables on display, as they will catch the eye of the opportunistic thief. Credit cards should never be left in the car. One in five of all credit card thefts occur from unattended vehicles.

IMPORTANT

As well as the previous tips, the following are a few general pieces of advice that can improve your personal safety on the road.

DO NOT Give a lift to a stranger.

DO NOT Leave children alone in the car.

DO NOT Get into a car with a stranger or try to hitch a lift.

DO NOT Let people who offer to help get into your car.

DO Let someone know if you change your journey plans.

DO Seek assistance straight away if you break down - don't delay.