THE *MODERN SAFETY DIRECTOR'S* GUIDE TO

EMPLOYEE SAFETY MONITORING

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Workplace safety legislation is changing around the world.

Although every industry strives for continuous improvement, incidents can and will still occur. Unfortunately, incidents often result in team members suffering injuries and being placed on short and long-term disability, or—worse—losing their lives. The law is responding by penalizing organizations that have not effectively kept their employees safe.

Your Safety Challenge

Lone workers are considered employees who work by themselves indoors, outdoors, while driving or in remote locations and are among the most vulnerable members of your team. But remember, lone workers aren't just those who drive to a site on their own or work at a remote power plant—they can be located within large work environments out of sight and sound from others.

Whether your industry covers natural resources, construction, transportation or manufacturing, are you doing everything in your power to keep your teams safe?

While many organizations believe the safety processes and policies they implement are in the best interest of their employees, budget restraints and complying with only minimum safety requirements can indirectly pose dangers to your team.

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Legislation Drives Change

A component of modern safety practices is the periodic confirmation of employee well being, often through a manual check-in process. Work-alone legislation may not be at the top of the regulation compliance list but has been enacted in many regions. And for good reason—it has the potential to be a capable program that can make a difference when conventional efforts have failed to protect the employee.

While manual check-in processes have promise, the reality is they fail to offer the responsiveness that every organization desires and may not be enough to make a difference.

Lone worker safety legislation is often worded around periodic, electronic or verbal confirmation of employee health and wellbeing. But these protocols are manually intensive and prone to human error. Employees often forget to check in or out, causing false alarms. And their supervisors may suffer complacency and forget to check in on someone who may need help. How long must an employee go without much needed assistance?

Legislation varies across industries, countries, states and provinces. Some progressive regions already have work-alone legislation in place with the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Australia and most Canadian provinces leading the way.

The UK is by far the most advanced region when it comes to lone worker safety legislation. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states "... procedures must be put in place to monitor lone workers as effective means of communication are essential." They indicate that solutions may include supervisors periodically visiting and observing people working alone, pre-agreed intervals of regular contact between the lone worker and supervisor, using phones, radios or email, or manually operated or automatic warning devices that trigger an alert when necessary.

In the United States, a clause often referred to as duty of care, under the 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act), states that employers are required to give employees a place to work that "is free from recognizable hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees."

Occupational Safety & Health Administration's (OSHA) website states "the courts have interpreted OSHA's general duty clause to mean that an employer has a legal obligation to provide a workplace free of conditions or activities that either the employer or industry recognizes as hazardous and that cause, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to employees when there is a feasible method to abate the hazard."

More than Work-alone Legislation

Breach of legislation is making headlines around the world. In Ontario, Canada, *Canadian Lawyer* magazine reported in January that leaders at a furniture company were issued jail time and a $250,000 fine in the death of worker, and the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* reported that a construction company was fined $112,500 over a worker's death in Waterloo in March of 2015.

Additionally, *Daily Mail* in the UK reported a business was fined £200,000 over the death of a worker who was trapped inside an industrial oven. And in the United States, the US Department of Labor's OSHA cited five companies following the December 2013 fatality of a temporary worker at the Amazon fulfillment center in Avenel, NJ.

For some organizations, compliance to legislation may be a top motivator, but this legislation exists with the goal of making a real difference. Some organizations fail to bring safety to the forefront, causing fatalities, injuries and a drop in workforce morale to disrupt company operations, impact the bottom line and possibly lead to legal implications like fines and even jail time. Now is the time to ensure your organization isn't lagging behind—**it's time to put safety and your employees first.**

Overcoming Your Challenges

TAKE PREVENTION SERIOUSLY

One key element for overcoming your organization's safety challenges is to implement a comprehensive communications plan for introducing employees to new safety programs.

HERE ARE A FEW STEPS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- **Implement a policy regarding the training and safe use of tools and machinery.** Ensure all employees are aligned and well versed on your policy and that protocol includes appropriate use of resources.

- **Provide First Aid training to all personnel.** Regardless of whether your teams work in bustling warehouses or isolated in the mountains, this is the best training possible to ensure your teams can support an employee who has suffered an incident, before emergency response arrives.

- **Recognize and mitigate risks.** Risk assessment is one of the most important elements. Does your risk assessment examine the context, environment, concerned individuals and their activity?

- **Make support resources available to all personnel.** From training to counselling, your employees need to feel supported and heard.

- **Ensure a clear understanding of safety responsibilities at all levels available.** An effective policy provides clarity to your teams.

- **Make safety of the individual a priority over that of physical property or productivity.** Your employees come first; they need to know that.

- **Provide and routinely update training for all personnel.** In addition to tool and machinery training, emergency response training is also vital.

Overcoming Your Challenges continued

DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE WORK ALONE POLICY
Does your organization have a current and effective 'work alone' policy in place?

During the course of employment, personnel may find themselves working alone, in isolation or beyond the potential assistance of others. You have a duty of care to assess and reduce the risks working alone may present. Core to the creation of your work-alone policy is the definition of when an employee is considered a lone worker and how his or her safety is monitored.

Your policy is not a replacement for health and safety documentation like regional or national safety policies. But you should be using this along with other occupational health and safety documentation, including legislation that may be in effect in your area.

A lone worker safety policy should be designed to provide yourself and other tiers of management with a framework to assist in the identification, mitigation and elimination of risks associated with working alone. The document is not intended to cause anxiety to your employees, but rather to provide personnel with the appropriate tools to manage the risks associated with working alone.

Some staff work alone for a variety of reasons including night shifts, closed-in spaces, travel, expansiveness of worksites or the general circumstances of the job performed. Even gaps in visibility between employees and ambient noise can stop an employee's call for help from being answered.

While some organizations opt to invest an enormous yearly spend into prevention, from personal protective equipment and hazard reduction to training and signage, **incidents still occur. When they do, your organization's ability to respond will be put to the ultimate test.**

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Technology's Role in Employee Safety Monitoring

THE OLD WAY

Manual check-in procedures are commonplace no matter the size of the organization.

Although your organization may generally support a two-hour check-in policy for your lone workers, it may be much too late to send help to your employees when they suffer an injury, health incident or physical assault. If it takes up to two hours to discover someone needs to be checked on, how long does it take to find that individual—especially if he or she is working off site or inside a massive warehouse?

Competing check-in approaches include telephone and radio check-in systems, supervisor spot checks that may be ad-hoc, regularly scheduled calls or device location updates. Some companies leverage supervisors or admin personnel within the organization to manage the process. Others use external call centers that present a tangible layer of costing.

HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP—FASTEST EMERGENCY RESPONSE

How many incidents have you read about in the news where organizations confess, "If only we could have been there sooner"? If an incident were to occur now, how long would it take your organization to discover something occurred and to trigger an emergency response?

History has shown that, for many companies, it takes many minutes to hours, and, on some occasions, even days. Would your workforce believe this is a reasonable response program in our age of connectedness?

Today, turnkey safety monitoring technology can dramatically improve emergency response time with real-time safety alerting and precise employee location reporting. In fact, these connected solutions can provide real-time awareness of an incident, empowering your organization to trigger the fastest possible response. Obviously prevention is the initial goal, but when prevention fails, what's faster than real-time?

Through the use of technology, you can improve the outcome of a downed employee, reducing injury severity, employee suffering and fatalities by using best practices to maximize your organization's response capability.

Best of all, safety monitoring technology can discover incidents automatically, keep false alarms to an absolute minimum and operate in a distraction-free manner. Employees can be monitored anywhere and everywhere, regardless of their location. Whether indoors, outdoors, while driving or in remote locations, there is a solution for your teams.

Blackline Safety is Here to Help

Blackline Safety, the manufacturer of the world's most comprehensive safety monitoring platform has your back. We create custom solutions based on your organization's safety needs.

With emerging legislation mandating the safety monitoring of lone workers in many regions, Blackline has positioned itself as a world player, providing service in more than 200 countries.

Targeting a broad cross-section of industries where safety is a corporate priority, Blackline's safety solutions deliver safety and location awareness through mobile messaging, a monitoring portal, our Safety Operations Center and web services. Blackline products allow organizations like yours to protect their personnel, share the conditions of their environment and connect with emergency services when necessary.

Our Loner® safety monitoring solutions are designed to improve the outcome of an employee who has suffered a workplace injury, health event or physical assault. Incorporating real-time communication and multiple location technologies, Blackline's products help employers manage an efficient emergency response to a worker's precise location. No matter where an employee is located—within buildings, populated areas or the remote reaches of our planet—we provide a complete suite of employee safety monitoring solution to match the challenge.

Are you ready to make the safety of your employees a top priority?

CLICK HERE FOR A FREE CONSULTATION →

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