



**St Germain's Church**  
Growing Christ-Centred Community

# ***Lone Worker – Personal Safety Policy***

Revision: 2.3

Date Approved By PCC: .....

Signed PCC Chair: .....

Signed Incumbent/Warden: .....



# Lone Worker – Personal Safety Policy

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## 1 Summary

Working alone is an essential practice for many in our church, either within the church buildings, in their own homes or other people's homes. Lone working cannot always be avoided. However this policy recognises the risks, and tries to minimise them by common sense and appropriate measures.

The purpose of this lone worker policy is to ensure that all staff and church members are aware of the specific risk in working alone and to set out the respective responsibilities of the PCC and each individual to minimise such risks. The PCC commit to carrying out their responsibilities in a thorough and disciplined way. It is required that all staff and church members abide by this policy.

## 2 Authorisation and Supporting Documents

The policy is to be approved by The Parochial Church Council (PCC) and will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure it remains up to date and fit for purpose.

The review of the policy will be undertaken by a Church Warden in consultation with the incumbent and Office and Facilities Manager.

Reference can also be made to our current insurance policies, the St Germain's Health and Safety Policy and the St Germain's Lone Worker – Personal Safety Policy Risk Assessment.

## 3 Who does this affect?

- The Vicar and other clergy
- The Church Wardens
- The Office and Facilities Manager
- The cleaner and voluntary caretakers
- Volunteers who work in the office
- Other volunteers who come into church to prepare the church for services
- Those unlocking or locking the church or hall
- Those doing maintenance on the church or grounds
- Someone doing a solo pastoral visit to people's homes
- Volunteers taking cash to the bank
- The vicar working at home



## 4 The Risks

This list is not exhaustive but identifies some of the risks faced;

- Physical accident (from injury, fire, etc. such as when using the kitchen or maintenance equipment when there is no one available to fetch help if necessary)
- Sudden illness, again when there is no one to raise the alarm
- Physical violence or threat of abuse in any form from a visitor
- Accusations by a visitor of inappropriate behaviour by staff / volunteers when there are no witnesses
- Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive calls or digital media

## 5 Responsibilities of the Employer

The PCC / Church Wardens – should show that “reasonably foreseeable risks” have been identified and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them. This can be done in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer.

The PCC / Church Wardens must

- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all lone working, with standard practices adhered to. For example, the accident books are in place and properly monitored.
- Equip vulnerable staff with appropriate communications tools so they can summon help when needed. For example personal alarms for staff in the office alone, or visiting homes.
- Ensure that every member of the church feels that the PCC has taken all reasonable steps to ensure their safety. For paid staff this should happen during their reviews.
- Insist that everyone follow the guidelines laid down on safe lone working.

Individual workers (staff and volunteers) must

- Ensure they don't put themselves in unnecessary danger.
- Be alert to possible dangers and minimise them.
- Undertake visits in pairs where possible.
- Not agree to meet anyone in an isolated place
- Carry a charged mobile phone, to use in case of emergency.
- Consider carrying a personal alarm.
- Keep all doors to the building locked when alone in the building.
- Not use power tools or work at heights when alone in the building.
- Choose different routes to the bank, when taking cash.
- Inform the Wardens or Line manager of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made to them.



## **6 Risk Assessment**

### **6.1 Formal Risk Assessment Overview**

The formal risk assessment and its recommendations are an important step in protecting our workers and the church, as well as complying with the law. It helps us focus on the risks that really matter. It will assess activities undertaken by workers by breaking them down and clarifying the level of risk by comparing severity vs. likelihood to provide a rating from which an action plan can be created to manage and reduce risk.

### **6.2 Dynamic Risk Assessment**

Rigid rules for risk management make it difficult for workers to act upon common sense, and in many cases can have a detrimental effect by pressurising workers to act in way that may be counter intuitive to what's actually happening.

By equipping workers with the skills to make quick decisions, safety can be improved and a culture for situation-based decision making can be developed.

If workers can make common sense decisions that are objective, logical and justifiable, then their dynamic risk assessment is likely to be clear and effective.

It is also vital that workers who have to carry out dynamic risk assessment are trained in good personal safety techniques and are provided with the necessary skills and tools to make a safe retreat.

### **6.3 What actions should be taken after an incident?**

If an incident does occur, there are some immediate actions and long term activities which can be used to support workers:

- Stop the task
- Provide or offer any medical, emotional or counselling support to worker
- Debrief and record the incident
- Report to the authorities as necessary
- Review incident to learn from experience
- Take actions to make lone working safer



## Appendix 1 – Responsibilities of Lone Workers

1. To be alert to possible dangers and to minimise risk by their own behaviours.
2. To carry a charged mobile phone at all times.
3. When either arriving at work early, or working late, to contact someone to confirm safe arrival and/or expected time back home. Greater care should be taken out of normal office hours and at night.
4. For potentially difficult visits; to inform others of their movements by keeping a register at a central location of visits being made, and informing others of time expected back, with an agreed action plan should the lone worker not arrive back on time, or communicate.
5. To inform one's line manager and/or other staff of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made toward them.
6. To avail themselves of all training opportunities provided by the employer.
7. To drive responsibly and to keep their vehicle properly insured, tested and adequately maintained, with breakdown insurance, always with sufficient fuel for any journey and to park in areas that are well lit at night.
8. At times when the office is open to callers, the worker is under no obligation to open the external door if he/she is unsure of the nature of the call.
9. At times when the office is open to callers, the worker should ideally carry a personal alarm especially when receiving visitors. (Personal alarm located under PC screen in office)
10. At times when the office is closed to callers, the gate should be kept locked.
11. Special care should be taken when admitting strangers into the church building at times when the church is normally closed. This is done at the worker's discretion.
12. At times when only one able-bodied worker is on site and is working primarily in the office, the door of the church at the west end should be kept locked.
13. Unexpected/unknown callers to the office should be met at the external door and not admitted to the office.
14. The worker should not give money to callers. Responding to requests for food, drink and other help is at the discretion of the worker. The worker is under no obligation to respond to such requests.
15. The worker should not respond to a need that requires him/her to go off-site without the permission of clergy/line manager/named contact.
16. In the absence of a clergy person in post, the worker should direct requests that need addressing by a clergy person to such a person in a neighbouring parish or to the Area Dean.
17. If an incident occurs which is a threat to the worker and/or the church site, the worker may attempt to notify a named contact person before deciding whether to notify the police.
18. If the worker feels his/her safety or the safety of the site is at risk, he/she must contact the police. If the police are called, the worker should notify the clergy/line manager/named contact person with details.