10 Steps To Protect Your Lone Workers

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Protect Your Lone Workers in 2026

Irish employers continue to face increasing scrutiny regarding how they assess and manage the risks associated with lone working. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) has highlighted that employers must take reasonably practicable steps to prevent injury, reduce risk, and ensure workers are not exposed to dangers without adequate supervision.

Whether your workforce includes social care staff visiting clients alone, field engineers travelling to remote sites, or retail and hospitality teams closing up late in the evening, a consistent, documented and proactive approach is essential.

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1 Understand the Legal Landscape in 2026

In Ireland, employers have a clear duty under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to protect employees, including those working alone. This includes carrying out suitable and sufficient risk assessments, developing safe systems of work, and providing appropriate training and protective measures.

Additional requirements apply under:

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007
- Night Work and Shift Work Regulations
- Codes of Practice relating to violence and aggression in the workplace

The HSA specifically notes that lone working increases risk because help may not be immediately available. Risk assessments must therefore reflect the unique hazards of isolation.

Irish employers should also be aware of the rising enforcement trends. In a 2024 case, an Irish utilities contractor faced investigation after a maintenance worker checking remote pumping infrastructure suffered a fall and could not raise the alarm for several hours. The HSA report highlighted the absence of a check-in system and no personal monitoring device[1].

Regulators and insurers in 2026 expect documented, role-specific protections supported by compliant monitoring systems aligned with BS 8484:2022 and EN 50518 for alarm handling.

References
1 - https://www.hsa.ie

2 Know Who Your Lone Workers Are

Lone workers are those who carry out tasks in isolation without direct supervision. This doesn't just mean people working remotely – it includes staff:

- Working late or early in offices, labs, or retail environments

- Travelling between appointments (e.g. engineers, salespeople, carers)

- Working at height or in confined spaces

- Operating equipment alone in isolated areas of factories, warehouses, or farms

- Delivering goods or performing maintenance off-site

Accurately identifying who qualifies as a lone worker is essential for applying the right level of protection.

In 2026, hybrid roles and decentralised teams mean many employees may only occasionally be lone working – but each instance still requires risk management.

3 Conduct and Maintain Risk Assessments

Irish legislation requires that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly. For lone working, assessments should evaluate:

- Environmental risks (e.g. weather, traffic, remote locations)

- Task-related risks (e.g. heavy lifting, machinery, working at height)

- People risks (e.g. dealing with aggressive customers, working in public)

- Health risks (e.g. sudden illness, mental health concerns)

Assessments must be written down if you have three or more employees, in line with HSA expectations. They must be living documents, updated when:

- Roles change

- Incidents occur

- Seasonal risks arise

- Work locations or site conditions alter

Failure to Update Procedures Leads to Safety Gaps

In 2023, an Irish housing support organisation came under review after several incidents involving antisocial behaviour at residential sites. The HSA found their lone worker protocols had not been updated to reflect the increased risk, leading to the recommendation of duress alarms and more frequent supervision[1].

References
1 - https://www.hsa.ie

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4 **Identify and Address the Full Range of Risks**

Lone working isn't inherently dangerous, but when something goes wrong, outcomes are often worse due to the lack of support.

Risks to consider:

- Slips, trips and falls – without immediate aid being available

- Assault or threatening behaviour from the public

- Driving accidents, particularly in poor weather or rural areas

- Working at height or with machinery, with no one nearby to assist

- Mental health impact of isolation and high-pressure situations

The HSA emphasises that employers must evaluate both predictable and situational risks[1].

References
1 - https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/lone_workers/

5 Create a Compliant Lone Working Policy

Your lone working policy should outline how your organisation protects those who work alone. A strong Irish-policy framework includes:

- Who qualifies as a lone worker
- How risks are assessed and mitigated
- Which safety equipment and systems are provided
- What to do in case of emergency
- How devices should be used and monitored
- Data privacy and employee responsibilities
- Policy review mechanism

As of 2025, having a lone-working policy isn't just best practice — it's a clear expectation of health and safety management.

Your policy should be practical, distributed to all affected staff, and regularly reviewed.

Almas Industries provides a free step-by-step policy creation template to clients, ensuring you're aligned with the latest guidance and insurance requirements.

6 Choose the Right Lone Worker Safety Devices

Technology can be a critical part of modern lone worker safety programs. Devices should be chosen based on job role, environment, and risk level. Types include:

- Panic Alarms – to call for help in case of emergency
- Duress Alarms – triggered subtly if under threat
- Man-Down Devices – detect falls or lack of movement
- Discreet Wearables – watches, fobs, or ID card-style devices
- Lone Worker Apps – for lower-risk roles with mobile phones

Key factors to consider in 2026:

- Does the device have reliable connectivity in your workers' locations?
- Is it comfortable and practical to wear during their shift?
- Is location tracking GDPR-compliant and only active during working hours?
- Are alerts monitored by an accredited Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC)?

The best device is one your team will actually use.

7 Set Up Effective Emergency Response Protocols

It's not enough to issue a device – you must define what happens when an alert is raised. This includes:

- Who receives the alert (internal or ARC)
- What checks are made before escalating
- What action is taken – e.g. phone call, site visit, emergency services
- How events are documented

ARC monitoring ensures 24/7 coverage and transfers response responsibility from your internal teams. If self-monitoring, you must guarantee rapid, trained responses at all times – evenings, weekends and holidays included.

Response times should meet EN 50518 standards: alerts qualified within 30–60 seconds.

In 2023, a county council water services employee suffered a fall at a remote station.

The man-down alarm triggered an ARC response, leading to rapid emergency dispatch and significantly reducing the severity of the injuries reported.

8 Train and Empower Your Workforce

Awareness and training are essential for lone worker safety systems to be effective. Employees should be trained on:

- How to identify risks and stay vigilant

- When and how to raise each type of alert

- What will happen after an alert is raised

- How their privacy is protected

Refresher training should be delivered annually or after any serious incident.

Your team is more likely to use safety technology if they understand its purpose and see it as a tool to support their wellbeing – not as surveillance.

9 Monitor Usage and Audit Your Safety Program

Device usage should be monitored regularly – at least monthly – to ensure:

- Devices are being used correctly
- Alerts are not being missed
- False alarms are identified and addressed
- Non-usage is flagged before it becomes dangerous

Run reports and spot trends: Are there specific times or locations with more alerts? Is one team member not using the device? Use these insights to improve safety and accountability.

Pro tip: Share anonymised usage data in team meetings to reinforce a culture of safety.

10 Respect Privacy and Build Trust

GDPR and worker privacy remain crucial in 2026. To stay compliant and build trust:

- Only activate location tracking during working hours or when alerts are raised

- Clearly communicate with your lone workers when audio recording or geolocation is in use

- Ensure monitoring partners comply with BS 8484 and EN 50518

- Securely store and restrict access to alarm data

Trust is the foundation of effective lone worker protection.

Your system should demonstrate care, not control.
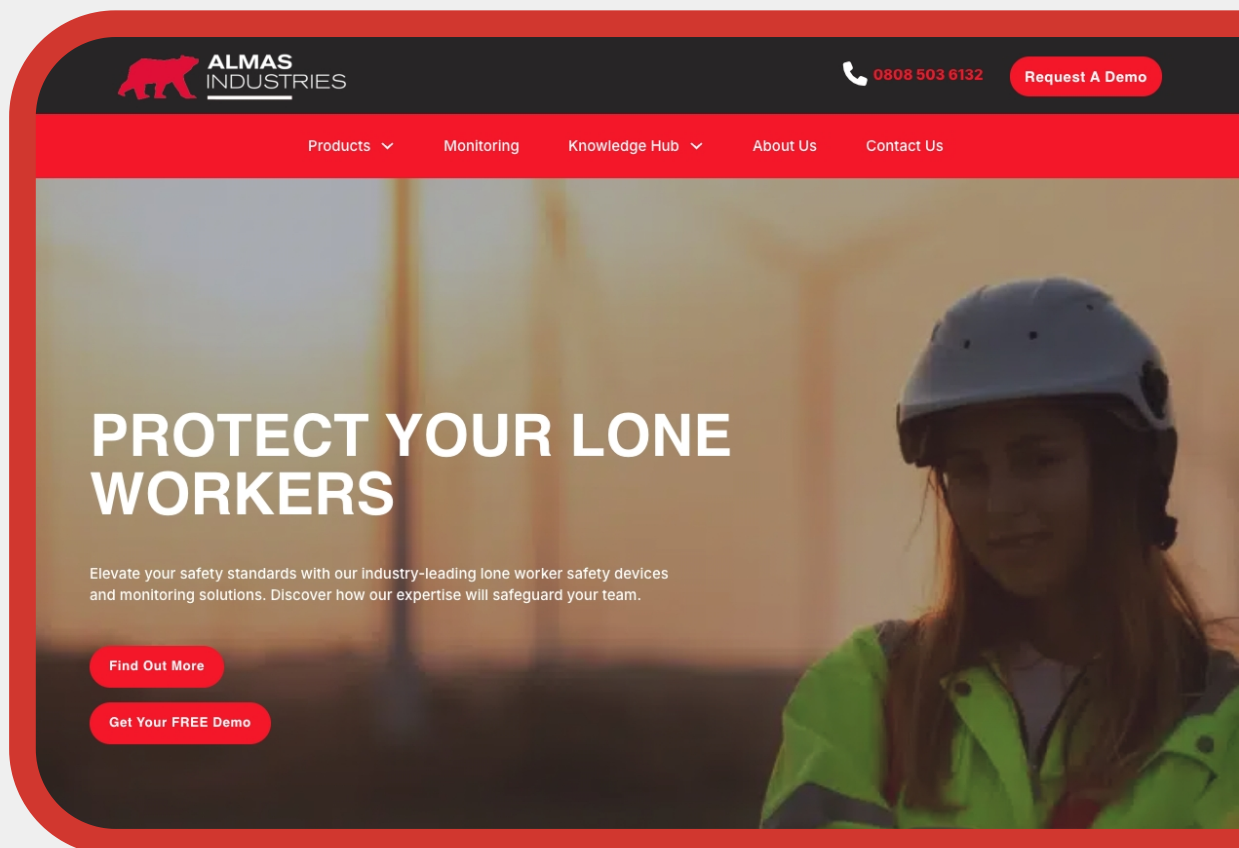
Lone Worker Safety Solutions from Almas Industries

Almas Industries offers a full range of lone worker safety solutions, tailored to the risks your employees face.

Our BS 8484-compliant devices include:

- GPS-enabled man-down alarms

- Wearable discreet panic buttons

- Duress alarms with audio monitoring

- Lone worker smartphone apps with check-in features

All are supported by our 24/7 ARC monitoring service for maximum peace of mind. We also provide risk assessment templates, lone worker policy guidance, and full onboarding training.

Learn more: www.loneworker-safety.ie/lone-worker-devices

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