Supervisor Secret: Are You Doing Enough to Protect Lone Workers?



Here are ten things to consider if you are responsible for the safety of lone workers.

#1 Invisible workplace hazards

Not every hazard can be seen before moving into an area. Although the health effects of poor air quality are often long-term, workers in high areas can be exposed to rising heat and fumes that can leave them unconscious away from help.

#2 Trips and falls

Trips and falls are one of the most frequent causes of workplace injury. These hazards can affect employees at any workplace, despite job responsibilities or other contributing factors.

#3 Heavy equipment accidents

Heavy equipment accidents can take many forms, and the resulting injuries such as machine entanglement have been identified among the most common workplace injuries. Following heavy equipment accidents, lone workers can be left immobilized away from assistance.

#4 Environmental dangers

For employees working outdoors, the environment itself can pose many risks. Besides threats from exposure including heat stroke and hypothermia, workers may encounter attacks from wild animal.

#5 Employees unable to communicate

Many safety systems rely on workers to call for the people nearby when they need help. Unfortunately, it’s impossible to predict situations where someone will be unable to call for help when they need it, ranging from medical emergencies to situations of extreme workplace violence.

#6 Remote workers in distress

Remote workers are a special case, because in very remote areas employers can face an incredible challenge locating a missing worker. Tracking employees with GPS is a start, but additional details are necessary since an employee can become separated

from the equipment that’s tracking them.

#7 Medical emergencies

To protect their workers, employers need to plan for health-related dangers that can’t be anticipated. Medical emergencies like heart attacks and severe allergic reactions can be sudden and happen anywhere.

#8 Hazardous objects

Whether working in construction, warehousing, or even retail, workers are often put at risk by the objects near them as they work. Injuries from being struck by or against nearby objects can be serious and include cuts, lacerations, and concussions.

#9 Vehicular accidents

Lone workers often need to be mobile, meaning that vehicles are part of their daily routine. Just like when employees are at a worksite, employers are responsible for the safety of their employees when they travel.

#10 Violence in the workplace

People don’t always recognize that when they work with the public, they are working alone. Employees working with the public who can easily become isolated are particularly at risk of violent attacks.

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