



Stay Safe[®]

B U S I N E S S

Lone Worker Safety

Field Services Sector: Best practice guide to protecting your lone working staff

Introduction

Field service management refers to anyone responsible for the management of a company's resources outside of the company property. Job roles range greatly, from technicians and engineers, to landscapers and cleaners.

Due to working off site, many field service employees work alone, remotely and outside normal working hours. This puts them at an increased risk due to a lack of direct supervision and support, and as a result, any risk they face, is faced alone.

With health and safety legislation tightening worldwide in recent years, it has never been more pertinent for employers to understand the risks employees face and the steps they should be taking to reduce risk and better protect their employees.

We have produced a practical guide to outline the risks present within field service roles, and help you understand your responsibilities as an employer, as well as offering advice on how to support your employees – particularly those working alone.

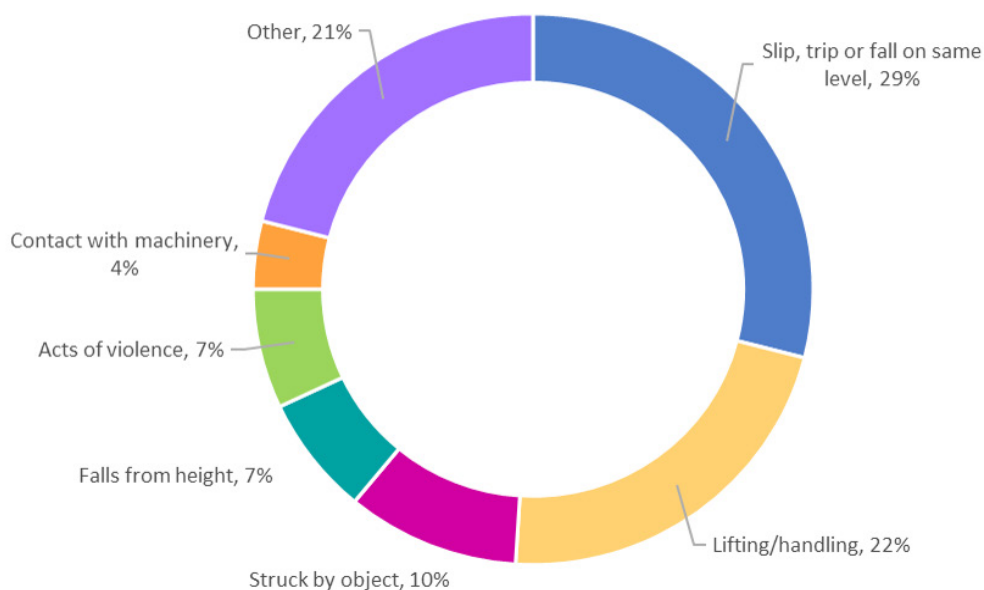
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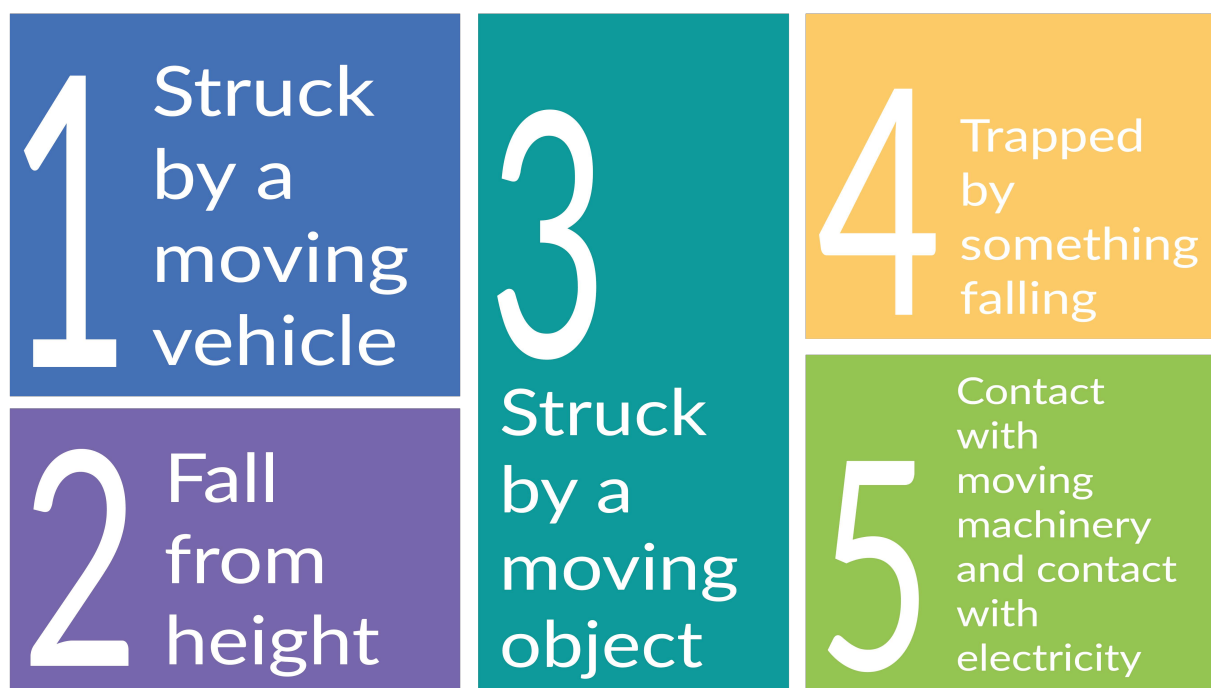
Risks associated with field service roles

Working across a range of potentially dangerous environments and with hazardous equipment and materials, exposes field service workers to some of the top causes of workplace accidents and fatalities.

Top causes of workplace accidents 2017



Top causes of workplace fatalities 2017 (UK)



*HSE (UK) 2017

Other risks to consider:

As well as these most common risks, field service workers are also exposed to other hazards which, if safety measures are not in place, can have detrimental consequences. For example;



Working in confined spaces

Working below ground or in confined spaces possesses risks, particularly when working alone or with electrical equipment. If structures are unstable, there is a risk of suffocation or being crushed if there is a collapse.



Driving

Traveling on the road is one of the greatest and most uncontrollable risks workers around the world face each day. In fact, it is estimated that more than a quarter of all road traffic accidents involve someone who is at work at the time (HSE 2014). Travel risks are not always immediately considered, yet many field service workers regularly spend time traveling between sites or workplaces.



Battery Charging

Engineers recharging batteries of vehicles could come into contact with toxic battery acid, causing serious burns. They are at particular risk if the battery is overcharged and explodes.



Working unsocial hours and behind closed doors

Aggression and violence is one of the top risks employees self-identified in the workplace (HSE 2016). While violence and aggression is usually associated with people-facing industries such as health and social care, field service workers are not exempt from the risk. Many field service employees work out in the field alone and alongside members of the public.

Lone working in the field service management sector

Many job roles within field services are now carried out by a lone worker. Whether this be inspecting a pipeline or carrying out maintenance on a remote site, working alone is commonplace across many sectors.



With increasing pressures to enhance profits and productivity, and an increase in automation and new technologies, the number of employees working alone grows year on year.

When working alone, the danger for field service workers is further heightened, as support is less accessible in the case of an emergency. Due to the high-risk and varied nature of the hazards present within the industry, receiving immediate support or medical help could literally be the difference between a minor injury and a life-changing or even fatal one.

Legal responsibility to lone workers

While there are few pieces of legislation that focus specifically on lone working rules, the duty of care remains the same as with other employees – to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, the health, safety and welfare of all employees.

Under most lone working regulations around the world, the employer's basic responsibility includes;

- Conducting thorough lone worker risk assessments
- Producing a written health and safety policy and ensuring all employees understand it
- Taking steps to reduce or eliminate risk in order to create a safe working environment
- Providing information, instruction, lone worker training and supervision where appropriate
- Regularly reviewing and improving upon lone worker risk assessments and policies

Failure to comply with health and safety legislation can cost the business greatly both short and long term. Some of the costs associated with an unsafe workplace include;

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| • Covering or replacing staff | • Legal fines (reaching the millions) |
| • Sick pay | • Loss of business reputation |
| • Lower levels of productivity | • Loss of contracts/clients |
| • Lost time due to stop work orders | • Damage to property or equipment |
| • Time and costs spent investigating an accident | • Other legal costs |
| • Compensation | • Excess on any insurance claims |



Tips to keeping your employee's safe

Due to the type of risks present across the field services industry, additional safety measures must be put in place. Some basic requirements include;

- Carry out thorough risk assessments
- Ensure all staff are trained according to the identified risks. Some examples include; working at height, how to operate machinery safely and defusing an aggressor
- Equip staff with personal protective equipment such as Hi-Vis clothing, helmets, safety boots and harnesses
- Secure loose equipment when working at height
- Implement emergency procedures including evacuation processes when working on site
- Regularly inspect and maintain equipment, structures and electrical sources.



Tips to keeping your lone workers safe

The previous tips should apply to lone working employees as well as those based on site alongside colleagues. However, there are additional procedures that should be put in place for lone workers based upon the risks they face.

Monitoring and checking-in

As lone workers are not directly supervised, procedures should be put in place for monitoring their safety and regularly checking in to make sure they are ok.

Panic and Man down

Lone workers should also be equipped with a way to signal for help in an emergency. A panic button will allow them to send an alert at any time while man down alerts will detect a fall and automatically send an alert on the employees behalf.

How can StaySafe protect your lone workers?

In a recent study, Capterra states that 52% of Field Service companies still co-ordinate work tasks manually. However, they predict that by 2020, over 75% of organisations with more than 50 workers, will utilise mobile apps that add capabilities that help field service technicians succeed. Safety apps can offer a new and efficient way of providing protection.

Our intuitive app provides a robust and effective way to monitor your lone workers and provide them with a way to signal for help in any situation.

The app monitors the location of lone workers in real-time and allows them to check-in safely once they have finished a lone working or travel session, or signal for help.

The cloud-based monitoring Hub provides an accurate location and up to date safety status so that you can keep an eye on all of your employees in one place.

Plus you will be notified of an alert only when you need to be – via SMS, email and optionally, a phone call.



Timed Sessions

Trigger location monitoring by starting a timed-session.



Session Check-in

Check-in at set intervals to confirm safety.



Panic

Send a panic at any time when in need of assistance.



Discreet Panic

Panic out of view using the phone's power button.



Duress PIN

Enter a false pin to 'end' a session/alert when confronted.



Non-Movement Alert

Automatic alerts when a period of non-movement is detected.



Low Signal Mode

The app will continue to operate without mobile data.



Low Battery Warning

Remind an employee to charge their device.



Pair with wearable technology

For quick and discreet check-ins and panic as well as fall detection.



Text & Email Notifications

Receive alert notifications via text and email.



Phone Call Notifications

Receive alerts over the phone through an automated message.



Two-way Audio

Listen in to verify an alert and communicate with the employee.



Keep an Audit Trail

Add notes on actions taken to resolve an alert.



Set Response Procedures

Save business guidelines in the Hub for monitors to refer to.



Reporting

Run and schedule session and alert reports.



SMS Broadcast

Communicate with an entire team from within the Hub.



Third Party Monitoring

Optional 24/7 monitoring and response on your behalf.

StaySafe in action

A number of companies operating within the field services sector currently use StaySafe to monitor and protect their lone workers. Operating in different areas of the world and across varying job roles, user feedback is testament to the easy to use and flexible nature of the StaySafe solution.



"StaySafe is an efficient and value saving solution that allows us to monitor all of our front-line employees distributed over a large geographical spread, from one place. Our team can now check-in at the touch of a button and supervisors will only be alerted when they need to be, freeing up time and allowing them to focus on other important tasks, while feeling confident that an alert system is in place to assure the safety of front line workers."

- A Jay Medwid, Manager, Operations Effectiveness at SaskEnergy, TransGas division



"StaySafe fits seamlessly into our flexible working pattern and is a huge improvement on the manual system we were operating previously. Not only have we saved time as a business, but we also feel confident that we are able to meet our legal duty of care to our employees. Knowing that our engineers have full access to this is great for us as a company but also gives them peace of mind that we are looking out for their welfare!"

- James Evans Director of i-Systems



"StaySafe has been well received across the app user and monitoring teams. We did initially experience some pushback from employees who felt like the app was a bit like 'big brother'. But once they started using the app and experienced their managers calling them if an alert went off, they felt comfortable knowing the app is there to protect them."

- Richard Young, Health and Safety Manager at Dennis Eagle



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"It is important that our lone workers feel reassured that their safety is taken care of and that we as a company are meeting our duty of care. Our staff now have peace of mind knowing that help is on hand wherever they are, should they need it. Launching StaySafe has also allowed our lone workers and their managers to focus more time on their day to day roles rather than on manual check-ins".

- Carla Whitaker at Clinton Devon Estates.

Conclusion

Those working within field service roles come against a range of risks on a daily basis. Working alone in such environments poses a new set of risks which require additional safety measures to be put in place.

Providing your employees with lone worker specific equipment and procedures will not only provide protection for your employees but will also allow you as a business to meet your legal duty of care - protecting you from potentially devastating financial costs.

StaySafe's lone worker solution is a cost effective and reliable way to provide a much needed layer of protection to your lone workers.

To find out more about our lone worker safety solution, visit our website or get in contact today.



Easy to use



Flexible & customisable



Always available



Low cost & scalable