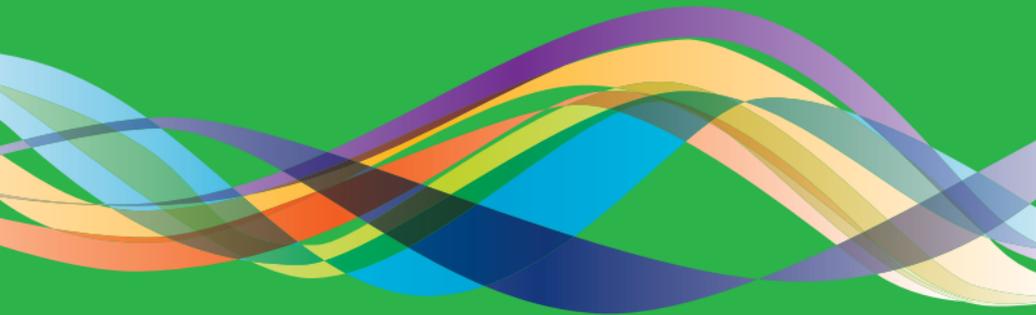


Keeping safe when working alone



Healthy workplace, healthy you
Health and safety

Under health and safety laws, your employer has a range of legal duties which include keeping you safe at work; providing a safe working environment; assessing any risks to your health and safety and taking reasonable steps to eliminate or reduce those risks. There are additional steps that you can take to reduce the risk of harm when working alone.

Before a home visit

- Familiarise yourself with your local policy and procedures for lone working.
- Ensure that you are provided with the right equipment to reduce the risks including a means of raising the alarm, know how to use it.
- Ensure you have as much information available as possible before doing a home visit or visiting an unfamiliar environment.
- Attend training such as conflict resolution and personal safety to prepare yourself for situations.

During

Follow a safe system of work: for example, use personal safety alarms as directed (check you have battery life and a signal before entering a patient's home) or call back to base/or a colleague between visits.

Assess your surroundings: is there anything around which is cause for alarm, such as a potential weapon, a dangerous animal? Think about how you will get out if things get difficult.

Assess the client/s: is their behaviour or the behaviour of someone with them cause for alarm? Are they acting in a strange manner?

Act: if you feel in serious or imminent danger withdraw to a place of safety. Where it is safe to do so use de-escalation techniques. If you feel the situation escalating, use strategies to remove yourself. For example, *"I just have to pop back to the car to get some notes"* or *"I just have to go to the other room to get some equipment"*. Use your lone worker alarm systems as per your employer's policy/procedure.

After

Remember to report any concerns, including near misses, verbal or physical abuse to your line manager, the police (in case of assault), your RCN representative and via your organisation's incident reporting systems.

Your employer's counselling or employee assistance programme, RCN counselling service or organisations such as Victim Support are there to support you if you are traumatised by an incident. Seek support as early as possible.

The NMC *Code* states that you should take account of your own personal safety as well as those you care for.



Further information

For further information read the RCN's guide *Personal Safety When Working Alone* available at www.rcn.org.uk

To find out who your RCN workplace representative is or to get advice on violence and lone working safety, including support if you have been assaulted, contact RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100 or visit www.rcn.org.uk/direct for online advice on violence and raising health and safety concerns.

RCN Counselling Service

Tel: 0345 772 6100

Victim Support (England and Wales)

Tel: 0808 1689111

Victim Support (Scotland)

Tel: 0345 603 9213

Victim Support (Northern Ireland)

Tel: 028 9024 3133 or 0845 3030 900



The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies

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A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of several overlapping, wavy bands in various colors (purple, yellow, green, blue, orange) that create a sense of movement and depth.

To find out more about the RCN's healthy workplace campaign, visit www.rcn.org.uk/healthyworkplace