



# Method Statement

## Lone Working

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# Lone Working

## Issue History

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# Lone Working

## 1. Purpose and Scope

This method statement sets out the Combe Mill Society's ("The Society") policy concerning Members and Volunteers working alone at the Mill and provides guidance as to the measures that any such individuals should take to keep the risks posed to the worker concerned to a minimum.

It also provides instructions concerning the employment of lone workers at the Mill.

## 2. Background

1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) says of lone working\*:

"Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people working alone.

Employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. They also have responsibility for the health and safety of any contractors or self-employed people doing work for them.

These responsibilities cannot be transferred to any other person, including those people who work alone.

Workers have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work activities and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations."

2 In this method statement the word Volunteer means 'A person who has volunteered to help the Society and whose name is on the Society's books but has not as yet become a Member.

## 3. What is Lone Working?

1 Lone workers at Combe Mill fall into two broad categories.

- a A person working alone at the Mill when the premises are otherwise closed.
- b A person working in a location that is isolated from persons elsewhere on the site.

2 It is very easy to overlook persons falling into the second category. For example:

- a A single person working on the Beam Engine, whilst two of his colleagues worked on the water wheel, would be a Lone Worker.
- b If there was only one worker on the water wheel then both that worker and the worker on the Beam Engine would be Lone Workers in the eyes of the HSE.

## 4. How Does Combe Mill Control the Risks?

1 The relevant guidance prepared by the HSE is written in terms of the responsibilities of the employer and the employee (commonly referred to as the worker). In the context of the legislation, the Combe Mill Society (The Society) is the employer. In a conventional firm the difference between those who represent the firm ('the management') and those

\***Protecting Lone Workers:** How to manage the risk of working alone" HSE Leaflet INDG73(rev4), first published 03/20

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carrying out the work ('the workers') tends to be fairly clear cut. All Members and Volunteers need to be aware that within Combe Mill the distinction is much less obvious.

- a The majority of Members and Volunteers will on occasion represent the management and on others be a worker.
  - b In order that the system can work and The Society meets the terms of the HSE's guidance, it is essential that all Members and Volunteers understand which role they are carrying out at any one time.
- 2 The Society has a duty to assess risks to lone workers and to take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary. Any assessment must include:
- a involving workers when considering potential risks and measures to control them
    - ◇ This requirement means that those who are to run the risks must be involved in reducing them to an acceptable level.
  - b taking steps to ensure risks are removed where possible, or putting in place control measures, to ensure the worker is able to perform the required tasks in safety
- 3 The Society must provide instruction, training and supervision as necessary.
- 4 The HSE further states that the risk assessment should help employers decide on the right level of supervision.
- ◇ They emphasise that there are some high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be physically present.
- 5 The HSE's guidance extends to matters beyond those summarised above and Members and Volunteers are encouraged to read the HSE's leaflet.
- 6 Operating within the above constraints The Society has tried to make its system as straightforward as possible. The key features, as the system applies to Lone Working, are:
- a The Society requires that all proposed work is subject to a risk assessment before it is carried out.
  - b For the major tasks carried out at the Mill, the risk assessment is supported by a method statement
  - c On occasion the risk assessment identifies work that cannot be carried out on a Lone Worker basis. In such cases this prohibition is incorporated into the method statement. The following examples are typical (but **not** exhaustive):
    - ◇ No steam plant may be operated unless at least two competent persons are present at the Mill
    - ◇ Certain aspects of the boiler cleaning require the presence of at least three persons
    - ◇ No person may enter the Coldwell on the beam engine unless a second person is present at the engine;
      - ⇒ This latter requirement goes beyond the normal Lone Worker restriction in that it requires two persons to be physically present in the engine house.
    - ◇ No person must ever enter the lift if he/she is working alone.
      - ⇒ A lift failure could trap the person in the lift until another person arrives at the Mill.

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- d The Society never requires a person to work alone.
- 7 The Society recognises that working alone increases the risk associated with any operation because it requires an individual suffering an accident or succumbing to ill health to deal with the situation himself / herself. As a consequence the Society requires all Members and Volunteers proposing to carry out work as Lone Workers to establish effective communications (see Section 5) and has in place arrangements to cover the case where a contractor or self-employed person is proposing to work alone (see Section 6).

### 5. Lone Working by Members and by Volunteers

#### *5.1. Single Person Working at the Mill*

- 1 The tasks carried out at the Mill are organised on a different basis from the way work is organised in a conventional firm. All Members and Volunteers are in fact volunteers in the sense that they are unpaid and carry out the work because they are prepared to do it.
  - ◇ There is no contract of employment between the parties.
- 2 From the perspective of the HSE, this difference in basic organisation has no impact on the way that Health and Safety must be organised within The Society. The Society's responsibilities are those of any employer and the Members are required to comply as if they were employees.
  - ◇ This requirement is immutable and there can be no exceptions.
- 3 Members and Volunteers working alone at the Mill should ensure that someone outside the Mill is aware that they are at the Mill and the approximate time of their expected arrival and departure.
  - ◇ The person chosen as an external back up could be another Mill Member or a partner or similar person.
- 4 In addition, a Member or Volunteer intending to work alone at the Mill for any length of time should make arrangements to establish and maintain contact with this external person. The following arrangement, though not mandatory, would be regarded as good practice:
  - a Contact the outside person to inform him/her that you have arrived at the Mill.
  - b Make further contact at regular intervals
    - ◇ Say, every hour, on the hour.
  - c If contact has not been made within, say, fifteen minutes of any appointed time, then the outside person should contact the Mill worker:
    - ◇ The preferred method would be by mobile phone
    - ◇ The Mill has a land line (01993-358694) but contact via this route is dependent on the Lone Worker being able to hear the phone ringing.
    - ◇ If contact cannot be made with the Mill worker, the external person should go to the Mill.
  - d Prior to leaving the Mill, contact the external person to establish that you are leaving the Mill

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- ◇ This will help to avoid unnecessary trips to the Mill by the external person because he/she cannot contact you.

### ***5.2.Lone Working Involving More Than One Person at the Mill***

- 1 As noted in Section 3, it is possible for a person to be classified as a Lone Worker when there is more than one person present at the Mill. In the extreme case, this could lead to an arrangement where two persons were each working as Lone Workers, neither had an external contact and each was acting as the other's 'external contact'. When such an arrangement is in place, it is essential that a formal arrangement is made between the parties. The arrangement should include:
  - a A formal recognition of whether both or only one of the parties are Lone Workers.
  - b How the parties intend to maintain contact with each other
  - c What actions are necessary if one of the parties intends to leave the Mill
    - ◇ Clearly this would normally lead to the remaining party being a Lone Worker at the Mill without external contact.
      - ⇒ The Society takes the view that such a situation would be unsatisfactory and that both parties should aim to finish at the same time.

## **6. Lone Working by Contractors and Self Employed Persons**

- 1 Different arrangements apply to contractors and self-employed persons. In these cases a contract exists between the Society and the person doing the work (even if the contract is actually with the worker's employer). The required safety arrangements then become:
  - a As with all contractors, the Society has a duty to inform the contractor of the risks that arise because of the hazards at the Mill.
  - b The Society requires the contractor to carry out a risk assessment and to prepare a method statement setting out the work that he proposes to carry out and the safety arrangements that he will have in place.
    - ◇ If this involves Lone Working then the contractor will need to determine how the necessary supervision will be provided and to inform The Society of the arrangements.
      - ⇒ In turn The Society will be expected to approve these arrangements.
      - ⇒ The Society may well need to provide some, even if not constant, supervision.
  - c No person working alone must enter the lift.
- 2 In the event that The Society determines to employ a self-employed worker it will cooperate with the worker in order to determine how any necessary supervision will be provided.