

Lone Worker Safety

Working at Customer Locations

According to OSHA, 5,147 people died on the job in 2017. This equals approximately 99 fatalities per week or 14 per day. A lot of these incidents occurred in workplaces the employee was familiar with and in the presence of other workers. When working in places we are not familiar with, the potential for injury increases. When we are alone, response time can be delayed, and the seriousness of injury can increase. When we are both alone and in an unfamiliar place, the result of an injury can be catastrophic. The potential of a catastrophic event occurring can be greatly reduced if we spend a few minutes planning and intentionally increase our level of awareness. Shown below are 6 simple tips to help you be prepared to work alone safely.

1. **Share Your Schedule** - Make sure someone at work or home knows where you are, and what your schedule is. Consider setting a schedule for planned communication so that if an emergency occurs, people start looking for you sooner.
2. **Know the Location** - Familiarize yourself with exit locations, fire extinguisher placement, and safety supplies. In an emergency, time is precious. Knowing how to get out and where equipment is will speed up your decision-making process.
3. **Control Your Safety** - Do not rely on the customer for your safety, bring your own personal protective equipment. Depending on the hazards faced and distance to your office, consider having backup safety equipment in case items get damaged.
4. **Recognize the Hazards** - Know the potential hazards of where you will be working. Are there chemicals present, do sources of electricity need to be controlled, is there going to be dangerous equipment? Knowing the hazards will help you properly prepare and provide the opportunity to create safer work spaces.
5. **Prepare to Communicate** - Carry a cell phone or other type of communication device with you at all times. In the event of an emergency, prompt medical response is critical. Searching for a way to call for help can waste valuable time that your body cannot afford to lose.
6. **Maintain Your Alertness** - Be aware of the surroundings and minimize your distractions. Avoid working with headphones or ear buds and playing music. Frequently look around and pay attention to changes in the environment. When walking out to your vehicle, keep your hands and mind clear. Look around and keep your electronic devices stored until it is safe to use them.