



## **Lone Working Volunteer Policy**

## Statement of Policy

It is rare that volunteers at Ulster Wildlife carry out duties by themselves. Working alone carries additional risks due to incapacitating injury or personal attack therefore, on the occasion that a volunteer is working alone, the following policy outlines the necessary measures in place to minimise risks and keep them safe.

## Definition

The definition of lone working applies to situations through work duties where volunteers are travelling alone, working alone in the field, at sites or nature reserves, at the home of a member of the public or in other potentially vulnerable situations.

The Health and Safety Executive describes lone workers as **“those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.”**

## Implementation

Volunteers should not be working alone if a risk assessment shows that the task is potentially too hazardous to be carried out alone. Some sites or tasks may require employees or volunteers to carry out their roles in pairs –your Supervisor will inform you if this is the case.

Once a decision has been made that the task will be carried out alone, volunteers **MUST** implement the ‘Buddy System’:

## Buddy System

The ‘buddy’ system is a simple way of tracking your location and your expected return time and is normally operated in pairs. A buddy may be a colleague at the same office or reserve, a partner at home, or a friend etc (someone who can be trusted with your welfare/safety). Remember that it is **YOUR** responsibility to inform your buddy of your whereabouts.

When working alone, you must observe the following rules:

- Ensure that someone (your buddy) knows where you are going.
- Let them know when you are expected to return.
- Make sure your buddy knows what to do if you do not return on time or if you do not call to say why you are delayed. Inform your buddy of the non-return procedures shown below and provide them with any relevant telephone numbers.
- Mobile phone must be fully charged and include numbers for the Volunteer Officer, Ulster Wildlife Office, PSNI and Emergency Services.

## Non Return procedures

If you do not return or contact your buddy by the expected time they should take the following action:

- Telephone you on your mobile (or at the office where you have been working/at your last known destination).
- Continue to try to make contact at intervals for one hour.
- After one hour ring the lone worker emergency telephone number 07703 673233 and inform the on-call officer of the situation.
- The buddy and the on-call officer should go together to your last known destination and, as far as is practicable, check the site.
- If this does not result in contact with you within two hours of the expected return time, the circumstances must be reported to the relevant local police station/coast guard, who will implement their emergency procedures.
- The kind of information that will be needed/requested to assist with searching for a missing individual would be: What do they look like? What were they wearing? And, what is the make, colour and registration number of the car they were in?
- What is the grid reference of the area in which they were working? Where have they parked their car?

You should print out the information above to give to your buddy. Write down your mobile telephone number and all the relevant land-line and mobile telephone numbers for other volunteers or staff you may be working with. The make, model, colour and registration of your car should also be recorded.

The same procedures for lone working apply if you are alone on nature reserves, in offices or workshops, travelling on public transport or in a private vehicle or when visiting members of the public in their own homes. It is your responsibility to keep yourself and your buddy up to date with procedures and with correct contact telephone numbers.

## Emergency Contact Numbers

Ulster Wildlife will provide volunteers with up to 2 emergency numbers of Ulster Wildlife Officers which can be used outside of working hours. These numbers are for emergencies only and should not be used when normal contact during working hours would be appropriate.

## Non working Activities

It is recommended that any Ulster Wildlife volunteer take normal precautions, while visiting Ulster Wildlife property, on their own time and outside working hours or previously approved operations, to include:

- Letting friends or family know their intentions and itinerary.
- Carrying a mobile phone with suitable contact numbers pre-entered.
- Using good judgment regarding their actions and behaviour.

### Retaining Emergency Contact Information

A confidential data base will hold the name, address and details for two next of kin contacts on each volunteer:

There is no responsibility on buddies to follow up/keep track of movements unless agreed.

### Emergency Scenarios

<u>INCIDENT</u>	<u>CALLER</u>	<u>RECIPIENT 1</u>	<u>RECIPIENT 2</u>	<u>FACTORS</u>
Volunteer potentially putting themselves at risk while on Ulster Wildlife business	Volunteer	Buddy 1	Buddy 2	Volunteer phones buddy before they commence Ulster Wildlife business, to brief buddy as necessary and agree next steps. Usually meaning if no return call within a time period, then commence action.
Volunteer needs to make contact with UW outside hours	Volunteer	Supervisor	Operations Director	Volunteers have contact numbers for up to 2 Ulster Wildlife officers.
Volunteer doesn't turn in for work as expected	Supervisor	Volunteer	Emergency Contact 1	Supervisor needs contact details for volunteer and 2 emergency contacts.
Volunteer in situation during working hours where next of kin needs to be informed	Supervisor	Emergency Contact 1	Emergency Contact 2	Supervisor needs contact details for 2 emergency contacts (next of kin).