

press release

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Health and Safety Executive produce research document on Lone Worker solutions

Romex applications solve all issues raised

Occupational group is the factor which is most strongly associated with the risk of assaults at work (Budd, 1999). However, exposure to violence at work not only depends on a person's occupation but also upon the circumstances and situations under which a person performs their job. Working alone, for example, increases the vulnerability of workers (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000.)

Romex (Romex World Ltd) the Mobile Application Service Provider has worked to develop a Lone Worker Protection (panic button) Solution for GPS enabled mobile phones. This software is available for Blackberry, Windows and Symbian devices. The innovative lone worker solution is unique in that it delivers pinpoint accuracy via the phones GPS and offers both red and yellow alerts for employees and can be self monitored or managed by a 24/7 Alarm Receiving Centre.

With the recent changes to Health and Safety Guidelines (INDG73rev2) and the new BS8484 standard for Lone Worker services means that providing Panic Alerts via a mobile phone is the best way for companies to provide compliance with Duty of Care to their employees.

The HSE defines a lone worker as:

Someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision Lone workers include those who:

- work from a fixed base, such as one person working alone on a premises (eg, shops, petrol stations etc);
- work separately from others on the same premises (eg security staff) or work outside normal hours;
- work away from a fixed base (eg, maintenance workers, health care workers, environment inspectors);
- work at home (homeworkers); and
- mobile workers (eg, taxi drivers).

The number of people working alone is increasing. As automation spreads in factories and offices, solitary work is becoming more frequent. The growing practice of sub-contracting, outplacement and teleworking also add to the growth of lone working. In addition, the combined push of increased mobility and the development of interactive communication technologies encourage the development of one-person operations. As well as those who work alone for the majority of their working time, there is a greater number of people who work alone part of the time (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000). Lone work does not automatically imply a higher risk of violence, but it is generally understood that

working alone does increase the vulnerability of workers. Moreover, this vulnerability will depend on the type of situation in which the lone work is being carried out.

The key risks identified by the HSE are as follows:

- Alcohol and drug use, by clients and members of the public with whom the lone worker comes into contact. Alcohol and drug use can make people aggressive and their behaviour unpredictable.
- Geographical locations. Certain areas of towns or cities, eg town centres or council estates, were known to have a higher risk of violence.
- Late evening/early morning work. Working during these times carried an increased risk of violence because there were generally either fewer people around, a greater number of 'unsavoury characters', or people under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Nature of the job. In some jobs lone workers hold positions of power or authority over customers or clients which can cause resentment and cause people to be more aggressive.
- Clients or customer behaviour. For a number of reasons, clients or customers can be highly emotional, unpredictable or aggressive.
- Other people or situations encountered whilst doing job. These include members of the public, youths and animals.
- Travelling, visiting homes and carrying money or equipment were also identified as key risks.

In all the situations described above, Romex's device tracking software would instantly enable a lone worker to raise the alarm via their mobile phone. The software is configured to work as a panic button in emergency situations. When threatened or injured, the user presses a pre-configured button on the Smartphone that is programmed to call the monitoring centre. Romex's monitoring solution on a range of Smartphone devices allows the monitoring centre to remotely listen in to the employee's handset thus determining a course of action to follow. This technology means a lone worker if in a hostile, dangerous or threatening situation can discreetly send an alarm with the knowledge that a trained operative is listening to the situation they are in.

In the research undertaken by the HSE, they have found that emergency incidents have various long term consequences for not only the individual but also the company.

Effects on the individual

- Stress, anxiety, fear and depression. Also resulting from having to deal with persistent verbal abuse.
- Stress-related health problems. Often leading to long-term sick leave.
- Psychological problems. For example, employees may sometimes feel partly to blame for violent incidents, or feel they have failed in some way.
- Low morale and loss of confidence. This can affect an employees' ability to do some or all of their job.
- Physical harm and injury. Leading to sick leave.

Consequent impacts on the organisation

- Staff retention and recruitment problems. For example, hearing about violent incidents may make the job less attractive to potential recruits; and experienced staff may leave a job if they no longer feel safe or able to cope.
- Sick leave. This can result from stress-related health problems or a physical injury following a violent incident.

- Low productivity. High levels of sick leave; staff refusal to do certain jobs, high insurance premiums and compensation claims; and breakdown in client-professional relationship – can all have a detrimental impact on an organisation’s productivity and profitability.
- Impact on the self-employed. Self-employed people could ultimately lose their livelihood and be faced with limited work choices.

Installation of a Lone Worker protection solution can not only protect an employee but also referring to the points above, save a company a lot of money.

Jason Laight, Sales Director of Romex said: “We find this information extremely relevant to the work we have been doing it developing our Lone Worker Protection Solution. The HSE have spoken to 18 different companies across various sectors all of whom have identified similar problems. Once these issues have been addressed, workers then feel much safer in their working environment and become more productive. Companies reported that there were many benefits of having such a solution in place.”

He continued; “The request to integrate lone-worker services with our positioning software originated from our customer base. Interestingly, the companies in the HSE report had identified that mobile phones were the most popular form of communication for Lone Workers. We have created an application to work with mobile phones that will solve this problem.”

For further information on the Lone Worker Solutions, please visit www.romexworld.com

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For further press information or photographs, please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- *Romex is the first company to market with an off the shelf tracking product that is web enabled, easy to use and with a very simple set up. Software can be up and running within a matter of minutes.*
- *A 14 day FREE trial is available upon registration at www.romexworld.com*
- *Romex is a fixed cost product, requiring no additional in vehicle hardware.*
- *The modular architecture of the software enables businesses to converge their technology and utilise their existing assets.*
- *Romex software will be marketed through channel partners and distributors as this product will improve sales margins for existing core mobile businesses.*
- *Romex World Ltd is part of Citylink Group Ltd, a technology business with 25 years of investment and experience that has built a number of service based businesses and delivered innovative web-based solutions.*