Editorial 020 8295 8304 | Sales 020 8295 8307

RISKXtra

BREAKING NEWS　　try-leading" GRC solutions　　British Standards Institution named McAfee MPOWER Cloud Partner of the Year 20

LATEST ISSUE »

RISK XTRA FEATURED »

Lone Worker Technology: Towards Ensuring Increased Productivity

Posted On 08 Jan 2019　By : Brian Sims　Tag: 'Buddy System', ANT Telecom, British Occupational Health Research Foundation, Control Centres, DECTS, Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications System, Duty of Care, Employeesd, Health and Safety, Lone Worker Technology, Lone Workers, Pro-Activ Publications, Risk Xtra, Safeguarding, Safety, security, TheSecurityLion, Training, TUC, University of Warwick


Ensuring staff safety is a crucial requirement for all businesses, and particularly so for those who require a cohort of their employees to work alone, writes Klaus Allion. With an estimated 6.8 million people working alone in the UK and over 600,000 injuries to employees at work between 2016-2017, it comes as no surprise to discover that job safety is a paramount element of the 'tech' revolution.

Besides the moral and safety benefits of adopting technology to improve the safeguarding of lone workers, through implementing the right solution employers can also unlock a huge improvement in productivity. It's therefore worth highlighting how businesses can take full advantage of lone worker technology to improve a workforce's capacity.

Until technology came to be widely adopted in worker supervision, the 'buddy system' was standard practice – a process which requires two employees to team up and work on a single task together. This ensures that, should one member of staff become injured, the 'buddy' works as a responder to immediately seek assistance. Once considered an adequate method of safeguarding, technology has now advanced to provide closer supervision opportunities, shorter response times in case of accidents and increased peace of mind for both management and workers alike.

This also allows lone workers to perform solo with complete protection, freeing up the 'buddy' colleague to do the same and thus doubling up the tasks completed in any one given working day.

Alongside this, another benefit of implementing lone worker devices throughout a workforce is multi-use functionality. Depending on the needs of the user, devices can incorporate features such as a panic button, tilt and no-motion sensors and impact alarms as well as two-way radio. Integrating communication tools such as a two-way radio is an easy and quick solution that allows staff to easily
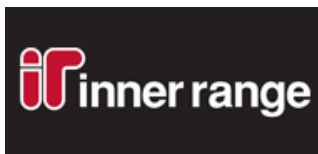
communicate with colleagues on site, whereas incorporating a Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications System can enable workers to communicate with employees off-site.

Integrating several tools and systems into one streamlined device is a simple and effective way to enable easy communication, boost productivity and ensure safety without the need for staff to carry multiple devices.

Improved confidence among staff

A recent study carried out by economists at the University of **Warw**ick revealed that happiness in the workplace led to a 12% spike in productivity, while unhappy workers were shown to be 10% less productive. Safety and well-being is a key factor in relation to happiness in the workplace. By prioritising Health and Safety, managers can significantly improve morale and productivity within a business.

According to research conducted by the British Occupational Health Research Foundation, 64% of lone workers report experiencing psychological distress, but studies conducted by the TUC have found that having a lone worker device significantly reduces the negative psychological impacts of lone working. As such, with the implementation of lone worker technology, employees can rest assured that their safety is cared for. Should an incident occur, help and assistance are never far away.

Maintaining employee confidence in your chosen technology also requires continual education and training as software updates on a regular basis. Employees will, therefore, need to receive ongoing training to ensure they're on the same page and following protocol and effective use of all technology to maintain compliance. This continued focus on keeping processes and devices up-to-date at all times is another factor businesses must adopt to make sure employees feel valued.

Unifying monitoring processes

When a member of staff has an incident or a critical machine fails, the response team needs to know immediately so that the episode can be dealt with quickly and effectively. Many current safety processes rely on alarm management processes where all alerts are routed through operators based at centralised Control Centres who, in turn, escalate and activate the response. These alerts are typically presented via a dashboard, but often don't provide enough information to differentiate between critical alerts and those that would be considered a lower priority.

Klaus Allion

Through the combination of pragmatic processes and familiar tools, critical alerts can be automated to go directly to the mobile devices of the most appropriate engineers on the site. Those same alerts can still be flagged to the Control Centre, but operators will be able to see that a critical task has been escalated, accepted and actioned by the best-placed person for the job. Thus the time-lapse between an operator receiving and responding to an alert is completely removed. The simplicity of this process can accelerate response times and free busy operators to focus on managing less time-critical tasks.

Lone worker technology has changed the game. To sum things up, the benefits and advantages of lone worker technology are about achieving compliance, maintaining staff safety and enabling the workforce to be more productive in their day-to-day tasks and requirements.

Aligning your business with the appropriate devices and software can not only ensure you're meeting Health and Safety requirements, but also improve productivity and the overall workrate of an entire workforce.

Klaus Allion is Managing Director at ANT Telecom

About the Author