

# Lone Worker Safety

## The Dangers of Inadequate Lone Worker Safety Management in the U.S. and Canada

### Introduction

Workers who work alone, whether repairing power lines, making home visits, or driving delivery routes, face unique safety challenges because of their isolation. A "lone worker" is generally defined as an employee who cannot be seen or heard by another person and does not have immediate access to assistance in the event of an emergency. Lone workers are found in almost every industry, including utilities and construction, healthcare, public services, real estate, and transportation. Unfortunately, the lack of nearby coworkers or supervision means that when incidents occur, these workers are more vulnerable and less likely to receive timely assistance.

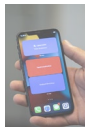
This white paper investigates the corporate risks of lone working in North America, the increased risks and consequences of insufficient lone worker safety management, and the regulatory and legal landscape in both the United States and Canada. By analyzing real-world case studies from various industries, it highlights the multifaceted dangers - human, legal, and financial - that organizations face if they fail to protect employees who work alone.

### Prevalence of Lone Workers and Incident Trends in North America

Lone working has become more common in today's workforces. It is estimated that over 25 million people in North America work alone on a regular basis. One industry report estimated 53 million lone workers in the United States, Canada, and Europe combined, accounting for roughly 15% of the total workforce. This number has risen over the last decade as a result of leaner staffing models, automation, and the expansion of remote and field-based roles. For example, post-pandemic labour shortages have resulted in more employees working solo shifts, and healthcare is shifting toward home-based care (a rise in lone home health providers). Almost every industry employs some lone workers, whether it's a nurse driving patients to their homes, a utility technician maintaining remote equipment, or a delivery driver navigating unfamiliar neighbourhoods.

Along with this prevalence, there are some concerning incident trends. According to studies, employees who work alone are more likely to experience accidents and injuries than those who work with others. In a recent 2024 survey of North American lone workers and their supervisors, **19% reported having a work accident and then struggling to get help**, while nearly 44% reported feeling unsafe while working in the field. These statistics highlight the serious risk that when something goes wrong for a lone worker, **whether it's an injury, a health emergency, or a violent encounter, a lack of immediate help can turn a manageable circumstance into a fatal one**. In 2024, one lone worker monitoring firm reported handling over 22,000 SOS emergency calls and nearly 1,000 cases requiring 911 dispatch in a single year, demonstrating how frequently lone workers face serious workplace threats.

Certain high-risk industries with many lone workers have alarmingly high fatality rates. For example, in the United States utility sector, an estimated 30 to 50 out of every 100,000 lone workers die on the job each year, ranking those positions among the top ten most dangerous in the nation. Overall, while workplace fatalities have gradually decreased over the last decade, the persistent hazards confronting isolated workers show no signs of abating, necessitating vigilant safety precautions.



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## Why Lone Workers Face Heightened Risks

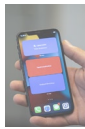
Lone workers face the same range of risks at work as any other worker, such as falls, equipment accidents, health emergencies, and violence. However, because they are alone, these risks or effects are often worse. If coworkers aren't nearby, no one can quickly spot a danger, remind the worker of safety rules, or help right away if something goes wrong. This means that a person who is by themselves is the only one who can see dangers and call for help. If they are unable to do this, rescue may not happen for a dangerously long time. People who work alone also seem like "easy targets" to potential criminals because they are alone. For example, a cashier at a convenience store who works alone, especially at night, is more likely to be robbed or attacked with a gun than a cashier who works with other people. Also, home health care workers who make house calls by themselves or real estate agents who meet with clients alone may be more at risk of violence. In many terrible cases across North America, the killers have admitted that they chose to target workers because they were alone. One well-known example is the murder of Arkansas real estate agent Beverly Carter in 2014. Her killer later said she chose her because she was "a woman who worked alone."

Isolation also exacerbates other dangers. In a 2015 incident where a maintenance contractor was overcome by methylene chloride fumes while refinishing a bathtub in Ohio, it proved fatal because a lone worker had no companion to pull them out or provide first aid if they were exposed to toxic substances or an unsafe atmosphere. OSHA concluded that the 30-year-old worker's death from chemical exposure, which "could have been avoided" with adequate ventilation and training, occurred after he was working alone in a restroom.

More specifically, in isolated locations, lone personnel are also more vulnerable to environmental hazards and health crises (such as severe weather, animal attacks, or unexpected medical conditions). For example, according to data from the U.S. Postal Service, more than 5,400 postal workers were attacked by dogs in 2021. This risk is exacerbated for mail carriers who frequently travel routes by themselves. In fact, the second fatal dog attack on a delivery worker in the United States in a two-month period occurred in late 2022 when an Amazon delivery driver in Missouri was discovered dead on a customer's lawn after being mauled by two large dogs while delivering a package. These incidents demonstrate how a situation that could be avoided with prompt action can become fatal when a worker is alone and there are no witnesses or helpers. It's also important to consider the psychological costs: working alone can lead to more stress and a sense of social isolation, which over time may exacerbate mental health issues or cause people to report emergencies less quickly. To put it briefly, lone workers are particularly vulnerable and need extra safety measures, regardless of whether the risk originates from the task, the surroundings, or other people.

## Regulatory and Legal Framework in the United States

Ensuring lone worker safety is not only a moral imperative – it's also increasingly recognized by regulators and laws, albeit in different ways across jurisdictions. In the United States, there is **no single OSHA standard or federal law** that explicitly addresses lone working or requires a dedicated lone-worker policy. Instead, the duty to protect employees who work alone falls under the broad **General Duty Clause** of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which mandates that employers provide a workplace "free from recognized hazards" likely to cause serious harm. This general requirement has been interpreted to include assessing and mitigating hazards faced by lone workers, such as ensuring they can request help in an emergency. OSHA and NIOSH (the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) have acknowledged the risks of lone work in guidance documents and recent initiatives. In 2023, OSHA and NIOSH launched a formal partnership to develop and disseminate information on lone worker safety, signaling a growing federal focus on this issue.



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## OSHA, and Evolving Clauses for Safety

Over a decade ago, OSHA also published *recommendations* for late-night retail employers to deter workplace violence – measures like improving visibility into stores, extra lighting, limiting cash on hand, and **avoiding lone staffing during overnight shifts**. While advisory, these best practices set an expectation. In fact, OSHA has used the General Duty Clause to enforce action against employers after lone-worker incidents, especially in cases of workplace violence. In late 2012, the agency cited a Texas convenience store and proposed fines of \$19,600 following the murder of a clerk who was **working alone at night**; OSHA found the store had failed to analyze the risk or implement basic safety measures like those recommended for late-night retail. This was one of OSHA's first prosecutions under a 2011 enforcement directive on workplace violence, putting industries on notice that *having an employee work alone in a high-risk setting without protections* is a **citable offense**. Although the absence of a specific lone worker regulation means enforcement can be challenging, the U.S. trend is that regulators will invoke general safety law – and even creative legal approaches – to hold companies accountable after egregious lone-worker injuries or deaths.

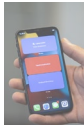
In some cases, U.S. and Canadian states provinces and municipalities have passed laws to protect lone workers. Due to fatal robberies of lone attendants, several cities and states now require two clerks or security barriers for overnight gas stations and convenience stores. In general, industry standards are changing:

- ◇ ANSI has safety monitoring technology guidelines, and trade associations recommend lone worker risk assessments. Individual employers must prioritize lone worker safety in their hazard mitigation plans. Companies that ignore clear risks like solo worker violence may be civilly liable. The U.S. limits injured workers' compensation claims to workers' compensation (barring gross negligence or intent), but families have filed wrongful death lawsuits or regulators have referred employers for criminal prosecution if deliberate safety neglect kills an employee.
  - In both the US and Canada, willful OSHA violations causing death are criminal misdemeanours under federal law, and while prosecutions are rare, they send a strong message. In summary, U.S. employers must identify and control lone-worker hazards under OSHA and risk significant penalties and legal exposure if they don't.

## Regulatory and Legal Framework in Canada

Many regions in Canada take a more prescriptive approach to lone worker safety, which reflects the country's stronger emphasis on safety legislation. At the federal level, the Canada Labour Code (Part II) and related regulations require employers subject to federal jurisdiction to ensure the safety of all employees, including those working alone. Federally regulated workplaces, for example, must create hazard prevention programs that consider lone worker scenarios. However, most Canadian workers are subject to provincial or territorial occupational health and safety (OHS) laws, with most provinces having specific provisions for lone or isolated work.

By 2025, at least seven provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island) and two territories will have explicit "working alone" regulations in their OHS codes. These rules typically require employers to conduct hazard assessments for any work that must be done alone, as well as to implement effective means of periodic check-in or communication to ensure the lone worker's safety. For example, British Columbia's OHS Regulation states, "Employers must have procedures in place to ensure the well-being of workers who work alone or in isolation." It also states that "lone workers must be able to get assistance if they are injured or there is an emergency."



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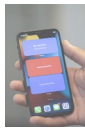
This typically entails establishing a system in which a supervisor or monitoring centre contacts the lone worker at predetermined intervals (and sets failsafe alarms if they do not respond), as well as providing a means for the worker to summon immediate assistance (such as panic alarms or satellite communicators in remote areas). Alberta's regulations also require employers to implement safety measures for any employee working alone, and since 2018, Alberta has added requirements for late-night retail: fuel and convenience stores must have violence prevention plans and require pre-payment for fuel to protect attendants following a series of deadly "gas-and-dash" incidents.

*These legislative changes were prompted by public outcry over incidents where gas station staff working alone were killed by customers fleeing without paying, and they underscore how Canadian provinces have moved to **codify lessons learned from lone-worker tragedies**.*

Canada has a strong tool in the Criminal Code for dealing with employers who carelessly disregard worker safety in addition to OHS laws. Organizations, companies, (and their leaders) can be held criminally responsible for failing to take reasonable precautions to prevent employees from suffering bodily harm, according to the 2004 amendments known as the Westray Law. This means that Canadian prosecutors have the authority to charge the company or its executives with criminal negligence in severe circumstances, such as deliberate disregard for known risks to a lone worker that results in a death. The existence of the law highlights that disregarding safety can have consequences beyond administrative fines, including criminal responsibility, even though such charges are rare. The reality of this "rarity", is that a conversely evolving increase of accidents and fatalities is setting precedent within Canadian courts.

As of now, in 2025, any investigation into a workplace death carries the lens of Westray Law charges, which strongly encourages Canadian employers to take preventative measures. Four migrant workers were killed and one seriously injured in a tragic scaffold collapse at a high-rise construction site in Toronto in December 2009. While renovating balconies on an apartment building on Kipling Avenue, the workers, who were working for **Metron Construction**, were on a swing stage scaffold that collapsed. According to an OSHA investigation, the scaffold was overloaded and badly constructed, providing insufficient fall protection for the workers. In 2015, Metron's assigned project manager on the scaffolding job, was sentenced to 3.5 years in prison for the disastrous safety failures. This was one of the primary scenarios where a company official being imprisoned under Canada's Westray Law. This conviction demonstrated how Canadian courts are becoming more inclined to prosecute employers for workplace fatalities when negligence is demonstrated. In fact however, it is openly opined by those in proximity to this case that the project manager *fell on his sword, because the obvious reality is that the policies and conditions that led to the accident were made at the executive level*. Primarily, the case sent a strong message to construction companies across the country about the repercussions of disregarding safety rules and not shielding employees from predictable risks. It also placed a larger set of crosshairs on upper management in these scenarios, who are shortly going to pay the piper themselves for these accidents.

Canada contributes to the establishment of industry standards for lone worker safety in addition to laws and regulations. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group) developed CSA Z1610-17, a specialized standard that provides comprehensive guidance on managing lone worker safety. It covers emergency response planning, monitoring and communication procedures, and risk assessment techniques. Despite being optional, this standard is widely regarded as best practice and is often consulted by organizations looking to go above and beyond the legal minimum. Also, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), which also publishes national guidelines for working alone, encourages employers to set up robust check-in systems, even in provinces without explicit lone-worker regulations. Employers in Canada are generally expected to take all reasonable steps to protect lone workers; failure to do so in 2025 in the case of a fatality will now certainly result in enforcement orders, heavy fines, or even court convictions.



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As an example, WorkSafeBC, British Columbia's OHS regulator, has imposed **heavy fines** on employers following instances in which lone workers **were endangered**. In one instance, where a serious injury sustained by a worker who had been working alone without proper safety precautions, **WorkSafeBC fined a utility company \$678,000** in an effort to make amends and discourage similar incidents. ConstructConnect.com/Canada. It is now clearly evident that Canada's legal system not only **outlines employers' obligations** to ensure the safety of lone workers, but it **also stipulates severe penalties for failure to do so**.

## Consequences of Failing to Protect Lone Workers

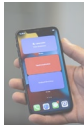
The consequences of inadequate lone worker safety management can be severe and multi-faceted, impacting people and organizations on numerous levels. First and foremost are the **human consequences** – the injuries or loss of life that can be directly attributed to a lack of proper safeguards.

- ◇ *Each incident involving a lone worker left in peril represents a tragedy that might have been prevented with better precautions. But beyond the immeasurable human toll, organizations face tangible **legal and financial repercussions** when lone worker safety is ignored.*

Regulatory agencies in both the U.S. and Canada have demonstrated a willingness to investigate and penalize employers after lone-worker incidents, especially where negligence is evident. OSHA citations for violations of the General Duty Clause can carry fines per violation (in 2025, up to roughly \$15,000 for a serious violation and up to \$156,000 for willful or repeat violations). If multiple employees or ongoing conditions are involved, these fines multiply – and high-profile cases can draw additional scrutiny, harm a company's reputation, and even lead to criminal referrals.

- ◇ For example, after the death of a home healthcare nurse during a solo visit in Connecticut in 2023, a federal OSHA investigation found her employer **had not provided adequate safeguards** against the known danger of violence by clients. OSHA cited the company for failing to protect staff from workplace violence hazards and proposed penalties totaling around **\$161,000**. The citation noted that robust policies (such as flagging high-risk clients, pairing staff on certain visits, or providing personal alarms) were lacking, and a tragedy resulted. Such enforcement actions not only impose direct costs but also often come with requirements for abatement (forcing the employer to invest in safety improvements).
- ◇ In Canadian jurisdictions, fines for lone-worker safety breaches have likewise reached six figures, and as described, there remains the possibility of **criminal liability** for egregious failings – a risk no executive or director takes lightly.

In addition to regulator fines, organizations are in greater numbers beginning to face civil litigation and liability costs. While workers' compensation laws protect employers in the United States from most employee lawsuits, there are **exceptions, such as when a third party (such as a property owner or security provider) is involved or when an employer's conduct is so grossly negligent that it falls outside of normal comp protections**. Prosecutors and investigators are beginning to use the written standards as the sole arbiter of case law. Families of victims often sue for wrongful death, regardless if there are immediate evidences that an employer willfully ignored safety. The simple reality is that most cases where a lone worker death or life changing injury happens, the aforementioned “math” as to compliance policies almost always leads to negligence. Where policies are followed, people rarely die, when they die, there is often a clear pathway of compromise and neglect.



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Even where lawsuits are settled or dismissed, **the legal defence costs and negative publicity is significant** and destructive. In Canada, injured workers (or their families) can sue outside of the workers' compensation system if an entity other than their direct employer was involved in the incident. This is very important, because it means that companies like contractors, clients, or security firms may be co-defendants when lone workers are injured. When a serious incident occurs, there are also costs associated with productivity losses, increased insurance premiums, and operational disruption.

Investigations and work stoppages in the aftermath of these events repeatedly cause projects to stall and or close, while the causality of accidents and fatalities impact other employees and lower morale and productivity. Furthermore, failing to protect lone workers can damage a company's reputation in the marketplace. Regular participation in government and federal RFI/RFP projects automatically denied where a company fails in these areas. There is simply too much risk. Also, work within areas of business that are connected to large financial organizations, and investment trusts bears too much risk. It does not matter in this case. In 2019, a large property management company partnered with a significant investment REIT suffered a multi million-dollar lawsuit over a lone worker incident in a rental suite. The employee suffered permanent brain damage, and the investment firm was forced to decouple with the property management firm, where were bankrupt within 90 days.

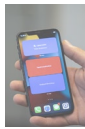
It is simply too much trouble for governments when business partners, investors, and the general public are all concerned about safety performance in the face of accidents and fatalities. A high-profile incident, such as the death of a delivery driver or an assault on a nurse in the news, can damage multiple reputations, reducing trust and employee retention. Clients who are concerned about safety cancel contracts, and top talent often declines to work for organizations that ignoring its employees. To summarize, the cost of failing lone workers is far greater than the cost of prevention. Organizations have the option of paying now for effective safety management or paying later for accidents, liability, and loss of goodwill.

## Real-World Case Studies Across Sectors

To truly appreciate the gravity of inadequate lone worker protections, one must examine real-world incidents. The following case studies from the United States and Canada, spanning a range of industries, illustrate how lone worker risks manifest and the severe aftermath when safety measures fall short.

- ◇ **Utilities and Field Service:** Employees in utilities (electricity, water, telecom, oil & gas) often work alone in hazardous or remote locations. One American electric utility discovered how quickly an ordinary task can turn deadly when completed alone.
  - In 2018, a lineman was dispatched alone to repair a downed power line in a rural area; when he came into contact with the live wire, he was electrocuted and collapsed, leaving no one to call for help. Unfortunately, by the time utility dispatchers realized they had lost contact and dispatched a team, it was too late. Such incidents are documented in statistics: utility lone workers have fatality rates several times higher than the national average.
  - In 2019, a pipeline inspection worker was stranded after a vehicle accident in a remote region of Saskatchewan; without a reliable satellite communication device or check-in, he spent critical hours injured and exposed to the elements. Although he was eventually rescued after an aerial search, the incident prompted the company to require GPS tracking and emergency beacons for all personnel working alone off road.

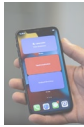




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These examples demonstrate the value of technology (such as automated man-down alarms and satellite phones) and strict adherence to check-in schedules in utility and field services work. They also demonstrate how regulators respond. Following a serious 2020 injury to a BC Hydro technician working alone, WorkSafeBC imposed a large fine and ordered systemic changes to the utility's working alone procedures.

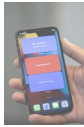
- ◇ **Healthcare and Social Services:** Professions such as home healthcare nurses, social workers, and hospice caregivers frequently involve entering clients' homes alone, where they can face volatile situations without backup. A chilling recent case is that of **Joyce Grayson**, a visiting nurse in Connecticut. In October 2023, she went alone to a patient appointment at a residential facility, unaware that the patient was a convicted sex offender with a history of violence. When she failed to check back after the visit, police were called and found that Ms. Grayson had been brutally murdered in the home's basement. OSHA's investigation later revealed the employer had not warned her or other staff about the client's background and had no robust lone-worker protection program – they hadn't provided personal safety alarms, and the check-in procedure was informal at best. The employer now faces citations and fines for failing to protect her from workplace violence.
  - Sadly, this is not an isolated incident. In Canada, a home-care aide in Winnipeg was sexually assaulted and killed in 2012 when she visited a new client's home alone – an incident that led Manitoba to review how home care assignments are risk-assessed and to implement a flagging system for known dangerous clients.
  - Social service workers have also been victims: In Alberta, 2012, peace officer **Rod Lazenby** was working alone investigating a bylaw complaint (an illegal dog kennel) on a rural property. The resident turned violent, ambushing and fatally beating Officer Lazenby in a remote outbuilding. An inquiry found that Lazenby had not been equipped with a radio or protective gear and had no partner—glaring safety gaps for an assignment involving a potentially unstable individual. His death sparked calls for legislative changes, and since then Alberta has tightened requirements on safety training and equipment for peace officers and clarified that higher-risk field visits should not be conducted alone. The healthcare and public service sectors have responded to such tragedies by developing protocols like “two-worker visits” for high-risk cases, duress alarm systems, and better training in de-escalation. However, these measures often come *after* a loss has occurred, underlining the need for proactive safety management.
- ◇ **Retail and Hospitality:** Late-night retail jobs (gas station attendants, convenience store clerks, hotel front desk staff) have long been recognized as high-risk if the worker is alone, largely due to the threat of robbery and violence. Numerous cases reinforce this risk.
  - In New Jersey in 2016, a lone gas station attendant working an overnight shift was attacked and killed during a robbery; investigators noted the station had no protective barrier and the worker had no panic button, despite a recent string of local robberies. OSHA cited the gas station's owner for willfully ignoring the hazard, referencing the known “*history of theft, armed robbery and fights*” at that location.



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- In Edmonton, Canada, two separate gas station incidents in 2015 led to the deaths of employees working alone (one run over in a gas-and-dash theft, another shot in a robbery). Public outrage pushed Alberta to enact rules by 2018 mandating **fuel pre-payment and violence prevention plans** as noted earlier, eliminating the scenario of attendants confronting gas thieves alone. Convenience store chains across North America have come under scrutiny as well – for example, a major dollar-store company was found to have at least six employees killed during armed robberies between 2016 and 2020, many occurring when a single clerk was staffing the store. This has led to advocacy groups pressing these retailers to adopt two-person shifts or better security measures. OSHA's 2011 directive and subsequent citations in late-night retail (such as the Texas case with a \$19,600 fine) demonstrate that regulators consider a lone employee at a crime-prone store to be an *unacceptable risk* if unmitigated. The lesson from retail and hospitality is clear: *failing to anticipate the dangers of solitary shifts can result in deadly outcomes and serious liability*. Many businesses now use closed-door policies (locking doors at night except for a service window), surveillance and alarm systems, and alternate staffing to protect lone workers in these settings.
  
- ◇ **Real Estate and Client Services:** The real estate industry was shaken by the previously mentioned Beverly Carter case, but unfortunately it was not an anomaly.
  - In 2019, a real estate agent in Toronto, Canada was showing a condo to a prospective renter when she was violently assaulted – she managed to escape, but the incident highlighted again how agents meeting strangers in vacant properties face significant risks. Real estate associations in North America responded to Carter's murder by launching safety training initiatives and apps that allow agents to check in with colleagues, but adoption is uneven.
  - Other client service roles such as insurance adjusters, home inspectors, or repair technicians who make house calls can face similar perils. A high-profile U.S. case in 2017 involved a pest control technician in Florida who was kidnapped and held at gunpoint by a customer; because the company had a GPS tracker on his vehicle and a missed check-in triggered an alert, police were notified and fortunately rescued him in time. This success story shows the value of technology and strict protocols.
  - Conversely, when those are absent, outcomes can be tragic – as seen in a case where a mobile notary in California was carjacked and killed in 2020 after going alone to a late-night document signing in an unfamiliar area without any tracking or emergency plan in place. These scenarios emphasize that even roles not traditionally viewed as “hazardous” can become dangerous when workers are isolated. Employers of such mobile staff are increasingly turning to **lone-worker monitoring solutions** (smartphone apps, GPS locators, wearable panic buttons) as well as training workers to recognize red flags (e.g. meeting in public first, trust your instincts with clients) to prevent worst-case outcomes.
  
- ◇ **Transportation and Delivery:** In the transportation sector, truck drivers, couriers, rideshare and taxi drivers, and postal workers all typically operate solo, facing hazards from accidents to violence. Long-haul truck drivers, for instance, account for a large share of occupational fatalities each year, primarily due to roadway crashes. When a trucker is seriously injured in a crash, being alone can delay the emergency response – especially in rural stretches of highway at night. There have been cases of truck drivers suffering medical emergencies (like a heart attack) and pulling over, but not being found until hours later.





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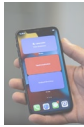
- One Canadian truck driver in 2016 pulled off an isolated highway in distress; by the time another driver stopped to check, the man had passed away. While not every such tragedy is preventable, these incidents have prompted some fleet companies to install in-cab monitoring that can detect driver inactivity or distress and automatically alert dispatch.
- For taxi and rideshare drivers, **workplace violence** is a predominant concern – taxi drivers historically have had one of the highest on-the-job homicide rates among all occupations. In Chicago, for example, four ride-hail drivers were murdered in separate robbery incidents in 2021, leading to renewed calls for better panic alert features in the driver apps and stronger coordination with police.
- Similarly, Canada has seen assaults on cab drivers (often working night shifts alone) leading to plexiglass partitions and GPS-dispatch systems becoming standard. Postal and parcel delivery personnel, as noted, face frequent dog attacks and occasionally other threats when dropping off packages alone.
- The U.S. Postal Service has publicized thousands of dog attacks each year and ramped up its worker training and public awareness campaigns (like asking pet owners to secure dogs during delivery hours)[theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com). A tragic convergence of hazards occurred in August 2022 in Florida, when a 61-year-old mail carrier named **Pamela Rock** was delivering mail alone and her truck broke down; as she exited the vehicle, she was attacked by five dogs. Neighbors called 911 when they saw the attack, but despite emergency response, Ms. Rock later died of her injuries[theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com)[theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com). The USPS, citing this and the Amazon case two months later, has emphasized that timely aid is critical – in both cases, bystanders or absence thereof made the difference.

For companies in the delivery and transport arena, these stories drive home the need for robust lone-worker protections: regular contact schedules, emergency communication devices, and perhaps most importantly, a culture where workers are encouraged to prioritize their safety (e.g. not entering a yard with loose dogs, being able to call for backup without penalty). Failing to do so not only endangers lives but invites legal accountability – transportation regulators and safety boards have investigated incidents to recommend changes, and in some instances, employers faced negligence claims for not providing drivers with a means to call for help or for sending a driver alone into a known high-crime area.

## Conclusion

In North America's diverse workplaces, lone workers play an essential role – often in jobs that keep society running, from maintaining our power lines to caring for patients at home. Yet as this paper has detailed, the **risks to lone workers are multi-dimensional and significant** when their safety is not meticulously managed. The past decade (2012–2025) has seen a litany of preventable incidents: employees injured or killed because no one was there to assist or because known dangers were not addressed by employers.

The **consequences** of such failures are equally far-reaching. Companies have faced regulatory penalties reaching six or seven figures, lawsuits and criminal investigations, not to mention irreparable reputational damage and the moral weight of having failed to protect their people. Conversely, these tragedies have prompted improvements – from new regulations in Canadian provinces and U.S. OSHA guidance, to the adoption of advanced lone worker monitoring technologies and stricter safety protocols in many organizations.



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The message to executives, compliance officers, HR leaders, and operations managers is clear: **protecting lone workers is not optional or incidental, but a fundamental aspect of risk management in today's workplace.** It demands careful planning – risk assessments tailored to lone work scenarios, rigorous training, reliable communication and monitoring systems, and a proactive safety culture – all supported by compliance with the relevant OSHA, NIOSH, WorkSafeBC, CSA and other standards and guidelines.

The examples and data presented herein underscore that inadequate lone worker safety management exposes an organization to unacceptable dangers. By learning from these real-world cases and aligning with North American best practices, leaders can take the necessary steps to ensure that no employee has to suffer alone in a preventable workplace incident. In the end, safeguarding lone workers is both a legal obligation and a moral imperative – and it ultimately protects not just those individuals, but the organization's integrity, financial health, and the trust placed in it by workers and the community.

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**Cameron C. Fry**  
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**BrightBuild FPS** is partnered with **Secapp OY**, a world class cloud-based Mass Notification and Alerting solution that provides best in class Lone Worker safety to public and private sector businesses and facilities. This white paper was researched and written in support of members of the public and private business communities in Canada and the US. BrightBuild supports a growing list of clients in healthcare, manufacturing, mass transportation, gaming, education, entertainment, property management who rely on Secapp for Alerting, Mass Notification, and Lone Worker safety.