

Working Alone: Isolation, Emergency Response and Check-In Systems Stats and Facts



FACTS

- **Delayed Discovery:** When a lone worker is injured, incapacitated, or unconscious, there is no coworker to call for help; an otherwise survivable incident can become fatal because hours pass before anyone realizes the worker is in distress.
- **No Witness to the Incident:** Without a second person on site, the cause of an incident may never be identified, leaving the same hazard in place for the next worker.
- **Failed Check-In Systems:** Manual call-in programs break down when batteries die, signal drops, GPS fails, or the worker forgets.
- **Workplace Violence Exposure:** Lone workers in retail, healthcare, security, social services, gas stations, and home visits face heightened risk of robbery, assault, and verbal abuse with no coworker present to deter, intervene, or summon help.
- **Environmental and Wildlife Hazards:** Outdoor lone workers – utility, oil and gas, forestry, surveying, parks – face heat, cold, lightning, rough terrain, and wildlife encounters with no immediate backup if they are injured, stranded, or lost.
- **Confined Space and Atmospheric Hazards:** Entering tanks, vaults, sumps, or enclosed equipment alone violates permit-required confined space rules in both the U.S. and Canada; oxygen deficiency or toxic gas can incapacitate a worker in seconds with no rescuer on site.
- **Untracked Travel and Driving:** Lone workers travelling between sites can be involved in collisions, breakdowns, or medical emergencies in remote areas where no one knows their route, ETA, or last-known position.

STATS

- The **NIOSH Lone Worker Partnership** (CDC, 2024) cites approximately 53 million workers across the U.S., Canada, and Europe – about 15% of the combined workforce – who work alone for at least part of their shift, with communication delays.
- The **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries** reported 5,283 workplace deaths in 2023, with transportation incidents accounting for 36.8% – a category dominated by workers operating alone in vehicles or on remote routes.

- The **Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada** (AWCBC) reported accepted workplace fatalities rising from 993 in 2022 to 1,057 in 2023, with rural, agricultural, and resource-sector lone-worker incidents contributing a significant share.
- **Alberta's Workers' Compensation Board** reported 203 workplace deaths in 2024 – the highest count in more than a decade – with multiple investigations involving workers operating alone in oil-and-gas, transportation, and maintenance roles.