Executive Summary

As the number of employees working alone during all or part of their working time increases, it is critical that employers are meeting their legal duty of care, whilst taking as much care for their lone workers as other employees and indeed not putting their lone workers at any more risk than other employees.

Equipping staff with lone worker technology is part of the solution, but as the array of personal safety alarm providers rapidly grows, it is important to make an informed decision when looking to implement lone worker safety technology. Fortunately, the BS 8484 Code of Practice for the provision of lone worker device (LWD) services has been developed, setting a benchmark against which all LWD services can and should be measured. Compliance with BS 8484 ensures a lone worker device service is fit for purpose.

Why is BS 8484 Important?

The growing volume of employees working alone has acted as a catalyst in recent years to the growth of the personal safety alarm provider sector and range of LWDs. Each provider makes its own case as to why it should be considered for implementation; from accurate location of lone workers, to the quick escalation of incidents to responders. However, there needs to be a clear standard against which to measure these claims, to help the employer make the right decision and choose the most appropriate lone worker device and supplier, to ensure best protection for their lone workers.

BS 8484 is the result of the security industry's insistence that best practice is promoted and a benchmark put in place, which sets standards for suppliers of lone worker device services to achieve and be measured against. In short, compliance with this Code of Practice promotes effective use of resource, maintenance of a good level of support for lone workers and minimises the risk of false alarms being received and responded to.

BS 8484 sets the standard for all aspects of lone worker device supply (including):

The Supplier (BS 8484, Section 4)	• Structure • Finance • Insurance • Premises
Lone worker device (BS 8484, Section 5)	• Communications network • LWD functionality • LWD user training
Alarm Receiving Centre (BS 8484, Section 6)	• Service • Operator training • Operating procedures • Response agreements

Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)

ACPO have published their policy on how and when they will respond to lone worker alarms. In short, much of their focus is on an ARC monitoring function that is credible enough to filter false alarms and on 'fit for purpose' lone worker devices (LWD) which work well for the lone worker. Their requirement is that ARC meets BS 5979 Cat II and the device meets the requirements of BS 8484. The policy also confirms that in order to get a Police response, the ARC in question must hold Unique Reference Numbers (URNs) for the appropriate Police force(s) needed to respond.

So, any employer looking to deploy a credible lone worker solution that can ensure them a Police response needs to be looking for a supplier who uses a credible ARC and compliant devices.

Identifying a credible LWD supplier

Employers need to ensure that they are getting a credible solution from a trustworthy supplier. The way to do this is simple - ask any supplier for a copy of their certificated approval against BS 8484. This should show that they have been audited against sections 4, 5 and 6 of the standard.

Any supplier not compliant through audit specifically cannot guarantee a Police escalation.

Connexion2 and BS 8484

Unlike other LWD suppliers, Connexion2 doesn't just comply with BS 8484, it has been audited and fully approved against all three sections (4, 5 and 6) the first device vendor to do so after the standard was released.

This means that any Lone Worker solution provided through Connexion2 is guaranteed a Police response should it be required, in line with the policy of ACPO.

Summary

For numerous and various reasons, the pool of lone working employees is increasing and together with their employers, they are faced with diverse and challenging working environments, in which they must take all reasonable steps, to ensure they are safe.

Choosing a lone worker device supplier, who is compliant with BS 8484 is the first crucial step to identifying a device that will enable and empower the employee to proactively take a greater share of responsibility for their own safety, security and well-being in lone working situations and demonstrates the employer is working towards meeting its legal duty of care.

Employers should use BS 8484 as a minimum benchmark against which to judge a potential supplier, looking for full audit against the whole standard. Without it, there is a heavy risk that a Police response in the event of an incident could not be guaranteed.

In short - full BS 8484 compliance ensures an effective solution is deployed across the workforce and guarantees a Police response when required.

Connexion2 Solutions

Based around Connexion2's Identicom LWD, a SoloProtect Solution is a fully inclusive managed service comprising:

➢ Identicom LWD or Identicom mobile
➢ 24/7 manned monitoring (ARC) to BS 5979 Category II
➢ mobile network connection SIM and tariff
➢ full user training
➢ support package

Disguised as an ordinary identity card holder, Identicom provides a discreet means of alerting the 24 hour manned monitoring centre to your lone working situation. The monitoring centre will listen to and record what is said during an incident, whether physical assault or verbal abuse. This ensures proportionate and immediate action, including a Police response where appropriate. Recordings are admissible as evidence in court and Identicom has assisted successful criminal convictions historically.

Variants of the Identicom LWD include:

➢ The i-Series with the options of 'Man Down' and/or GPS functionality
➢ The t-Series Identicom offering lone workers and their manager's greater location knowledge in order to reduce risks, also with 'Man Down' functionality option
➢ Identicom mobile – a BS8484 compliant application download for a BlackBerry or Windows Mobile Device.

ENDS.