My Safety Buddy™

State of Lone Worker Safety

Report 2021

Welcome to the State of Lone Worker Safety Report 2021.

In 2021, My Safety Buddy surveyed 100 Australian businesses to gain an understanding of the common challenges faced when managing lone worker safety.

The results - presented in this report - provide a fascinating insight into the shared concerns of employers in sectors as diverse as aged care, allied health, trades, transportation and government.

Read on to discover the answer to these questions:

- What challenges and safety concerns do Australian businesses have in regard to their lone or remote workers?
- How do they rate the overall safety of their staff who work alone?
- What safety systems do they have in place for those staff?
- Are their staff who work alone safe enough?

One of the most interesting insights afforded by the survey is that almost **half of all businesses surveyed have no lone worker safety management system.**

This is an extraordinary figure given the technological advances we've seen in recent years, where employers can now monitor and protect their lone workers remotely – without having to hire dedicated IT staff or draining their budget.

It's my hope that the data presented below leads to a rethink of lone worker safety systems nationwide, because everyone deserves to get home safe.

Travis Holland
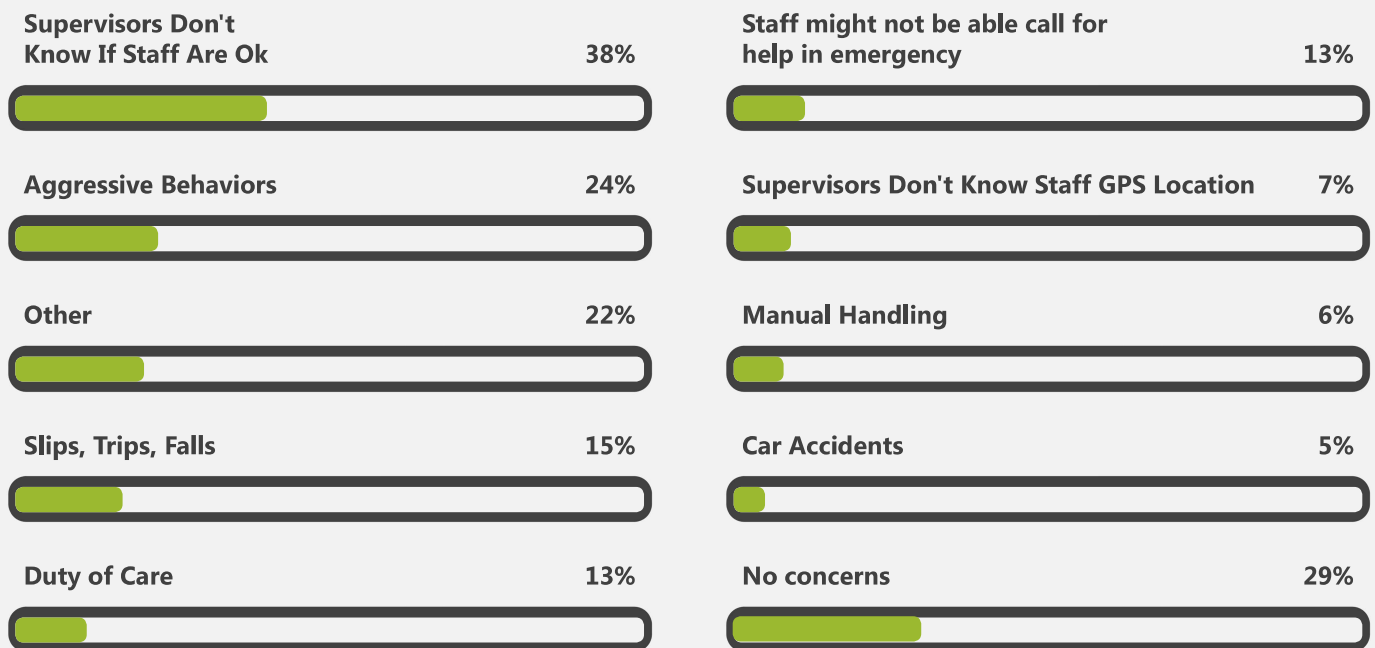
Founder & CEO

My Safety Buddy™

Challenges

When it comes to lone worker safety, the challenges are myriad. Around 70% of businesses highlighted at least one area of concern regarding lone worker safety – some identified multiple.

What stands out is the inability of supervisors to know if their lone workers are OK, and the management of aggressive behaviours in when workers are off-site.

These concerns highlight a pitfall of the 'analogue' management of lone worker safety – things like scheduled phone-ins, buddy systems and location boards. Businesses tell us these approaches often have spotty usage, don't provide up-to-date location data and can't send real-time updates on lone worker status.

If a system is too clunky to function as required, is it time to look for a replacement?

What challenges and safety concerns do you have in regards to your lone workers or remote workers?

Supervisors Don't Know If Staff Are Ok — 38%

Aggressive Behaviors — 24%

Other — 22%

Slips, Trips, Falls — 15%

Duty of Care — 13%

Staff might not be able call for help in emergency — 13%

Supervisors Don't Know Staff GPS Location — 7%

Manual Handling — 6%

Car Accidents — 5%

No concerns — 29%
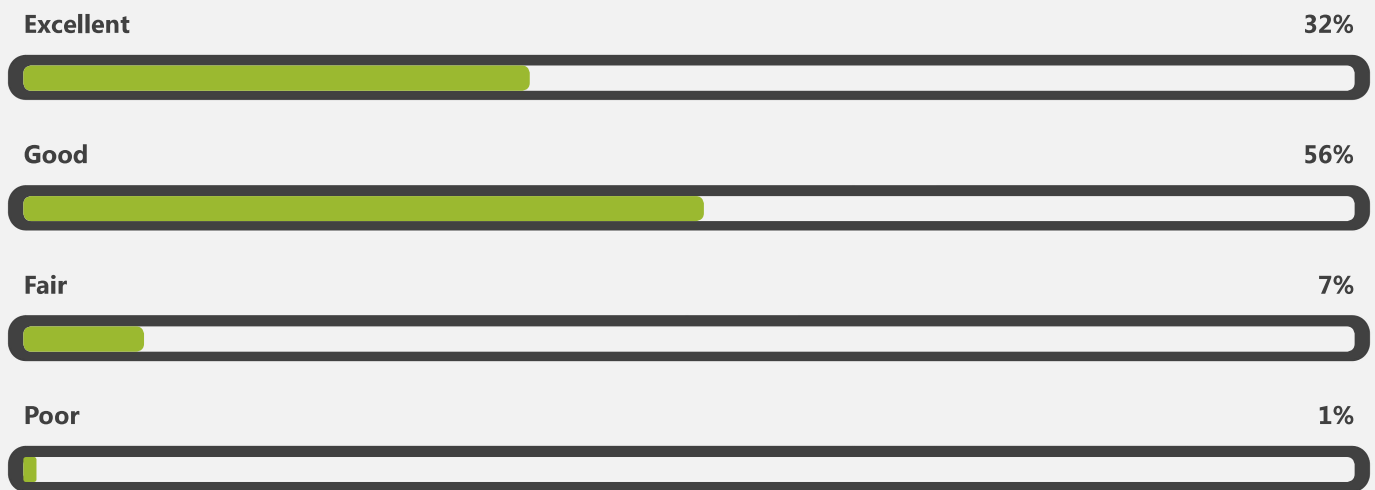
My Safety Buddy
Learning Centre

Safety

While 88% of businesses surveyed rated the overall safety of their lone workforce as 'good' or 'excellent', a third said their lone worker safety systems 'could be improved'

It appears many businesses believe their staff are safe, but don't have as much faith in the systems underpinning that safety. This can be easily and cost-effectively addressed with modern technology.

Rate the overall safety of your staff who work alone

Excellent   **32%**

Good   **56%**

Fair   **7%**

Poor   **1%**

Systems

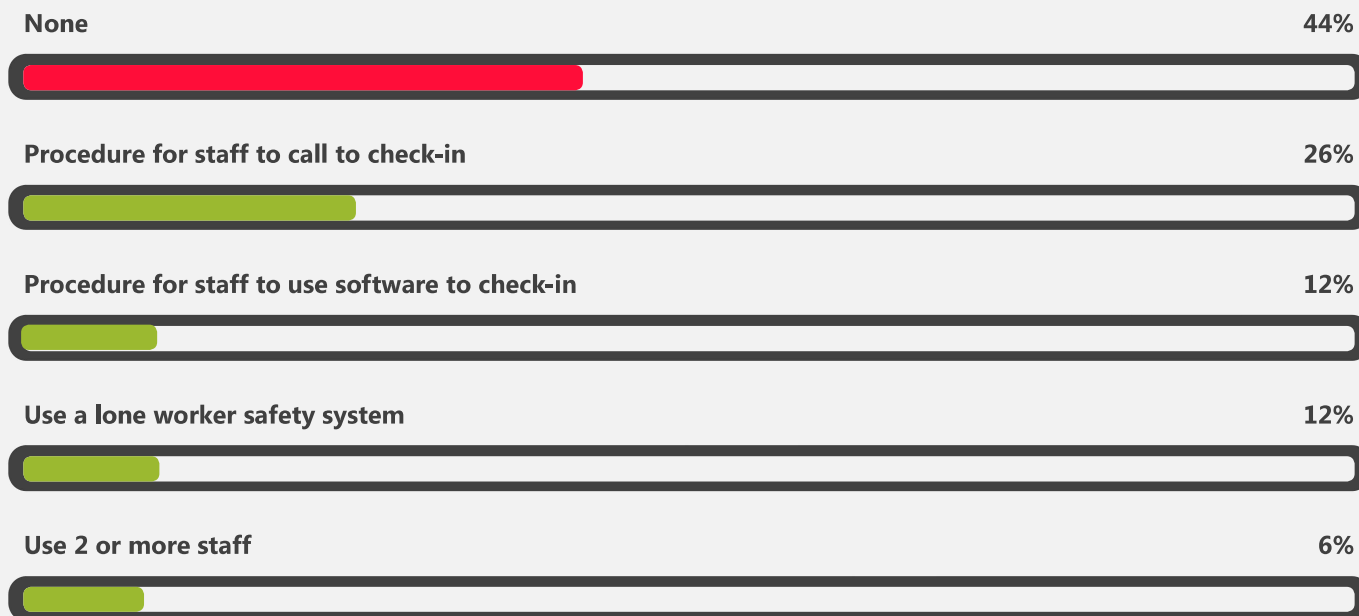Respondents identified four primary approaches for managing lone worker safety in the survey.

While a quarter said they regularly used the phone to check in on staff, 44% did not have a formal lone worker safety system in place.

This is a potential ticking time bomb for businesses.

Employers must manage the foreseeable risk of harm to their lone workers. Without taking steps that are deemed 'reasonably practicable', businesses will be found to have failed in their legislated duty of care. This obligation extends to the managers responsible for key decisions.

The upshot is clear – Australian businesses collectively need to lift in order to protect their lone workers. The good news? Next generation technology means it doesn't need to be costly, time-consuming or difficult to implement.

What safety systems do you have in place for staff who work alone?

None   **44%**

Procedure for staff to call to check-in   **26%**

Procedure for staff to use software to check-in   **12%**

Use a lone worker safety system   **12%**

Use 2 or more staff   **6%**

Safe enough?

Some of the most alarming survey data reveals a third of respondents believe there is room for improvement regarding the safety of their lone workforce.

And with 44% of businesses saying they have no formal lone worker safety system in place, it's little wonder they believe there's room for improvement.

One of the fastest growing solutions to this problem is the use of app-based, GPS-enabled software on mobile devices. And it makes sense – the one thing nearly everyone carries with them, no matter where they are, is their mobile phone!

Are your staff who work alone safe enough?

Yes   **71%**

Could be improved   **29%**