What to Check When Contractors Travel Between Job Sites

Why travel between sites needs its own safety plan

Contractors who move between job sites face a set of risks that a stationary worker does not. The commute might be a regular route one day and an unfamiliar worksite the next. Vehicle breakdowns, poor mobile coverage, unexpected delays, and the lack of a fixed base all make it harder to raise help when something goes wrong. A safety arrangement that works for someone at a single location may not cover the gaps that open up once a worker is on the road or at a temporary site. This article looks at the practical points to check so that contractors travelling between job sites stay connected and accounted for throughout their day.

Check mobile network coverage at each worksite

Mobile coverage varies enormously, especially in rural or semi-rural areas where many job sites sit. A contractor may drive through a dead zone, or arrive at a site where the mobile signal is weak or non-existent. If a personal alarm or check-in system relies on cellular data, a gap in coverage means the device cannot send an alert. Before the first visit to a new site, check the network status for that location. Many mobile providers publish coverage maps, and some third-party apps show real-time signal strength. If coverage is poor, consider a device that works with satellite or that stores alerts and sends them once the signal returns. The goal is to avoid discovering a blind spot only when an alarm is needed.

Confirm the check-in procedure for remote travel

A lone worker alarm is only as reliable as the process that triggers it. For contractors who travel between sites, a simple check-in schedule can make the difference between a quick response and a delayed rescue. The worker should agree with a supervisor or monitoring contact on a set of check-in times: for example, when leaving a site, when arriving at the next one, and at a fixed interval if the journey takes longer than expected. If a check-in is missed and the worker does not respond to a follow-up, the alarm can be raised automatically. The key is that the procedure is realistic for the worker's day and does not rely on them remembering to press a button at an exact moment. Some lone worker alarms include a timed check-in feature that prompts the user, so the process is partly automated.



Assess travel risk for each leg of the journey

Not all travel carries the same level of risk. A contractor driving a long distance on a motorway in good weather faces different hazards from one who navigates a narrow farm track after dark. The safety arrangement should account for the specific conditions of each leg: distance, road type, time of day, weather forecast, and the worker's familiarity with the route. For higher-risk journeys, the check-in frequency can be increased, and the emergency contact should know the intended route and estimated arrival time. It also helps to have a backup communication method, such as a satellite messenger or a two-way radio, for areas where mobile coverage is unreliable. The aim is to match the level of monitoring to the actual risk, not to treat every journey the same.

Choose a lone worker alarm that suits mobile use

A personal alarm that is designed for a fixed desk or a single indoor location may not be practical for a contractor who climbs in and out of a vehicle, walks across uneven ground, and works in different environments each day. The device should be portable, durable, and easy to activate without fumbling. A pendant or a belt-clip unit that can be worn throughout the day is more useful than something that stays in a bag. GPS tracking is especially valuable for mobile workers because it lets the monitoring service pinpoint the worker's location even if they cannot speak or do not know where they are. Fall detection is another feature that matters for contractors who work at height, on ladders, or on scaffolding: if the worker falls and is knocked unconscious, the alarm can still be triggered. The Mercari Lone Worker Alarm is one example of a device that combines GPS location, SOS alerts, fall detection, and direct 111 calling without ongoing monitoring fees, making it a practical option for contractors who move between sites.

Plan for communication breakdowns

Even the best alarm system can fail if the mobile network drops out or the device battery dies. A contractor travelling between sites should carry a backup way to call for help. This could be a satellite messenger, a personal locator beacon, or simply a written list of emergency contacts and a pre-arranged code word that they can text or call if the primary device stops working. The backup should be something the worker can use without thinking, and it should be stored somewhere accessible, not in a locked toolbox. It is also worth agreeing on a procedure for what happens if the worker does not respond to a check-in: who is called first, how long they wait, and what action they take. A clear plan removes the guesswork in a stressful moment.



Consider the practicalities of vehicle-based alarms

Some contractors spend most of their travel time inside a vehicle, and a personal alarm worn on the body may not be the best fit. A vehicle-mounted panic button or a device that connects to the vehicle's own communication system can be an alternative. However, the best approach is often to keep the alarm on the worker, not the vehicle, because the worker may leave the vehicle to inspect a site, walk across a paddock, or enter a building. A wearable device that works both inside and outside the vehicle gives consistent protection. If the vehicle has a

hands-free kit or Bluetooth, the alarm can sometimes be paired with the vehicle's speakers so that an alert is heard clearly, but the worker's personal device remains the primary safety tool.

Review the emergency contact list regularly

The emergency contact details stored in a lone worker alarm should be checked and updated whenever a contractor changes jobs, works for a new client, or visits a site with a different safety team. An old contact number or an outdated escalation procedure can delay the response by precious minutes. The worker and their supervisor should review the contact list at least once a month, and the worker should have a printed copy in their vehicle as well as a digital version on their phone. It is also wise to include the local emergency services number for the area where the site is located, especially if the contractor crosses regional or national borders. The aim is to ensure that whoever receives the alert knows exactly what to do and has the latest location data.

Make sure the device is tested in real conditions

A lone worker alarm that works perfectly in a showroom may behave differently on a windy hillside or inside a metal shipping container. Before relying on a device for daily use, test it in the actual environments where the contractor will travel and work. Check that the GPS signal locks on quickly, that the SOS button is not accidentally pressed by a seatbelt or tool belt, and that the battery lasts through a full day of use. If the device uses a mobile network, test the coverage at each site. If it relies on satellite, test that the line of sight is adequate. A quick test at the start of a job can reveal problems that would otherwise be discovered in an emergency. The **Mercari Lone Worker Alarm** is designed for field use, but every device should still be verified in the specific context where it will be used.



Keep the safety conversation open

The best safety arrangement is one that the contractor actually uses and trusts. If the check-in procedure feels like a burden or the alarm is uncomfortable to wear, the worker may skip steps or leave the device behind. Regular, informal conversations about what works and what does not can help refine the process. The contractor should feel able to say that a certain site has poor mobile coverage or that the check-in schedule is too tight. Adjustments based on real feedback make the system more reliable and the worker more likely to use it consistently. Safety is not a one-time setup; it is an ongoing practice that adapts to the changing conditions of each job and each journey.