

Lone Worker

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose

To provide and maintain a working environment that is safe for employees and without risks to health so far as reasonably practicable.

Definition

Lone workers are considered those who work by themselves and/or work in the community with only limited support arrangements, which therefore exposes them to risk by being isolated from the usual backup support. This is the case whether they regularly work alone or are only occasionally alone and do not have access to immediate support from managers or other colleagues.

Legislation

Work Health and Safety Act 2017 (the WHS Act)

Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees who work in situations that cannot be directly controlled by the employer due to the location, time and nature of the work. This includes office-based staff who may visit clients in the home or attend meetings and the like, off site or out of the area, care staff working off site, or office staff working alone in a Subee office.

Lone workers may work within proximity of others (seen or unseen), may be transporting a client in a vehicle, may be in a geographically remote locality, work during the daylight or at night, or in an office environment.

Procedure

It is expected that all staff take reasonable precautions in the conduct of work outside of an identified office or outside of business hours.

Lone workers should in general should:

- Know what measures are in place, be aware of alarm systems, be familiar with other persons in the immediate proximity, know exits and entrances.
- Ensure your mobile phone is charged (and know where to get best reception or where the closest payphone / landline is) and vehicles are in good working condition.
- If work involves areas which are isolated, poorly lit at night or known for high crime rates, arrange to check in with office or out of hours staff, or work with a partner if possible.
- If a potentially violent situation occurs be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.
- Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings.

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- Care staff are advised to carry a torch, mobile phone and personal alarm. Consider the environment around you – and changes that could occur during your shift to lighting, access and other potential risks.
- Always carry car keys and mobile phone in your pocket. In the event of you needing to quickly evacuate the dwelling, valuable time could be lost searching for such items. Clients may also move them and not remember where they put them.
- Park your car on the same side of the street as the client unless parking in a cul-de-sac in such cases park to ensure the quickest escape possible (with your vehicle facing the exit of the street).
- The client's door should not be locked unless on a Behavioural Care Plan.
- Care staff should have a first aid kit in their vehicle as well as a basic first aid equipment inside the dwelling. Call 000 in the event of an emergency.
- Know what first aid steps may be required in the event of the client (or yourself) being exposed to harmful chemicals (laundry, kitchen, cleaning) 13 1126 Poison Information Centre NSW.
- All staff should be familiar with the Lone Worker Risk Assessment which can be completed by the care worker or service coordinator as issues are identified.

Care staff

- Care staff should ensure they do not deviate from the assigned roster without first seeking approval from their supervisor. This includes unanticipated trips outside of the client's home, variation of start and finish times, variation of duties which may involve possible risk (a stranger or unsafe task).
- Care staff should take the precautions listed above under Lone Workers.
- If in doubt care staff should always ring the office or out of hours number (0418425504) for advice or support.
- Rostering/case management staff are responsible for alerting care staff of known and potential risks and providing care plan or risk assessment information.
- If the service is brokered and any risks identified by the service provider should be documented and communicated.
- If necessary, care staff should conduct a Service Risk Assessment

Office staff

- Staff must inform their supervisor or a responsible staff member if they will be attending a client's home or off-site meeting.

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- This includes providing details of the location, the times and contact mobile number.
- Staff who expect to go home afterward must advise the responsible staff member of this.
- Any deviations must be advised and approved.
- Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the situation including scheduled check ins or taking another staff member.
- Any assessment of risk should take into consideration the:
 - Environment – location, security, access
 - Context – nature/purpose of the task
 - Individuals involved (if known) – indicators of potential or actual risk
 - History – any previous incidents in similar situations
 - Any other special circumstances
- Client visits should be scheduled where possible during work hours.
- Staff should ensure that mobile phones are charged, and vehicles are fuelled and correctly maintained.
- Staff should remain vigilant during the visit and if in doubt should exit the situation as soon as possible.
- Should an incident occur the staff member should contact their office as soon as possible and follow the incident reporting policy and procedure.
- If working outside of business hours staff should ensure out of after-hours (0418 425 504) contact is programmed into their phones and contact that number in case of an incident.
- Any work outside of business hours or at another location (for example the staff member's home) must be approved by the Company Director prior to the event.
- If working alone in the office outside of core business hours employees should lock the front door and are not expected to answer incoming calls.
- Follow procedures above under Lone Worker Section.

Responsibility and Authority

Senior Management has responsibility and authority to ensure this procedure is followed. They may delegate tasks to qualified personnel as needed. All employees are responsible for knowing and following this procedure.

Training

Regular support worker meetings and face to face training to discuss and highlight any issues or concerns.

Altura eLearning module Loan working and personal safety is completed as part of new employee induction.

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Worker participant acknowledgement

I acknowledge receiving the Subee Code of Conduct; that I will comply with the Code; and that there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, which may result in the termination of my employment or contract for services.

Workplace participants name:

Signed:

Date:

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