

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

TITLE:	Working Alone	
DIVISION:	CORPORATE SERVICES-Human Resources	
DATE ADOPTED:	06/02/2007	FILE NO: 710/3.2

OBJECTIVE

To comply with the employer's general duties under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and the OHS Regulation 2001, regarding employees working alone.

PURPOSE

This Practice Note describes the requirement to identify hazards, assess risks and eliminate or control the risks. There is also a requirement to have a suitable means of communication in an emergency and a procedure for regular contact. To establish a safe work environment Council will provide adequate information, instruction and training for employees who work alone.

SCOPE

Those employees who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, may include, but is not limited to:

1. Employees in fixed establishments

- One person on the premises
- Working separately from others
- Working outside core hours e.g. cleaners, maintenance staff

2. Mobile workers working away from their fixed base

- On construction sites
- Maintenance, lift repairs, electrical, vehicle recovery
- Volunteers, bush care
- Community services, mobile library, rangers

A person who is working alone may include an employee, contractor or volunteer.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Council

It is the responsibility of Council that Managers and employees are aware of potential hazards associated with working alone. Council will review the workplace operations to ensure that employees working alone and in remote areas are kept to a minimum.

Managers

It is the responsibility of Managers that before an employee is permitted to work alone, particularly in remote areas, there is in place an appropriate set of risk management procedures to control the risks associated with working alone. Managers are to provide the relevant information, instruction and training to the employee working alone.

Doc.No: OHS:023-00	Custodian: OHS Coordinator	Review Date: February 2007
Created: July 2006	Page 1 of 3	Review By: February 2009

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Managers are also responsible for implementing the following procedures within their workgroup(s) and the risk of working alone is minimised by planning.

Supervisors

It is the responsibility of Supervisors that tasks *are* carried out according to the following procedures. It is the responsibility of Supervisors that employees who are required to work alone, particularly in remote areas, are aware of the potential hazards associated with the activity and its location and have completed training in the use of any special emergency arrangements including any communications equipment. As a risk control measure for working alone, supervisors are to arrange for the testing, maintenance and repair of any communication equipment which has been provided to employees.

Employees

Employees are responsible for carrying out all activities in a safe manner in accordance with procedures and training undertaken. As part of a risk management procedure for working alone, employees are to test all equipment required, including communication equipment and fix or report any faults to their supervisor before leaving the work base. Employees must be aware of any potential specific hazards and the risk management procedures required for the particular locations, where they are required to work alone.

PROCEDURES

1. Consult with staff about working alone and/or working in remote areas
2. Identify all locations and activities where an employee could be required to work alone
3. Complete a risk assessment for work activities (refer to Appendix 1)
Some factors to consider when assessing the risk of injury or disease for people who work alone.
 - The length of time the employee may be working alone
 - The time and location of the employee's work area (e.g. does this impact on fatigue issues?)
 - The communications between the location and the work base provide a means of regular contact and a call for emergency services
 - Alternative and back-up arrangements to communicate between the location and work base
 - The risk priority of the tasks undertaken
 - The availability and provision of first aid and other
 - The work experience, competencies and health of the employee
4. Implement the control measures identified within an agreed timeframe
Some control measures to consider:
 - Review the need for activities, the timing of these activities and the need to work alone
 - The increased provision of first aid and emergency equipment, either moved with the employee in a vehicle or pre-positioned in storage sheds at the work area
 - Communication procedures to monitor the safety of the employee to include regular report in times, agreed start and finish times or approved itinerary for remote locations
 - Contingency plans for response to failure to report in

Doc.No: OHS:023-00	Custodian: OHS Coordinator	Review Date: February 2007
Created: July 2006	Page 2 of 3	Review By: February 2009

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

5. Provision of information, instruction, training and supervision. Improved skills in first aid and emergency management may be necessary for employees working alone so that they can manage a situation until support and assistance arrives
6. Formally record the process
7. Review annually and record

REFERENCES

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000
Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001
Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA) – OHS Manual
Wingecarribee Shire Council (WSC) – Occupational Health, Safety and Rehabilitation Management System 2006 (OHSRMS)

DEFINITIONS

Working alone - a person is working alone when they are on their own, when they cannot be seen or heard by another person, and when they cannot expect a visit from another worker or member of the public for some time

Remote – a place that is a long way, from the infrastructure required in an emergency

Note: Employees who have regular contact with the public as part of their work are not 'alone'. In fact it is often the contact with members of the public that presents the greatest risk. The risk of work related violence that these employees may face is to be covered in a separate Practice Note.

REVIEW

This practice note will be reviewed as a result of organisational or legislative changes or as a minimum, every two (2) years.

Review Date: February 2007	Mike Hyde General Manager
Review By: OHS Coordinator Date: February 2009	Employee Representative OHS Committee

Doc.No: OHS:023-00	Custodian: OHS Coordinator	Review Date: February 2007
Created: July 2006	Page 3 of 3	Review By: February 2009