

Working Alone (After 5pm) Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure seeks to ensure the safety of all workers when working alone either onsite or offsite, particularly when working after 5pm.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, contractors, students and volunteers within ICH FIS. For the purpose of this procedure, these persons shall be referred to as workers.

3. Definitions

Working alone refers to any-time after 5pm where you are working alone without another worker present either in the community or at the office. This may occur to accommodate service user needs in visiting times and in completing necessary administrative work.

Service User is any parents or family, or carer named in the referral for whom services will be provided, including children.

Contact Person is the typically the ICH FIS Manager, or in their absence, the ICH FIS Senior Team Leader for general matters. The ICH OHC Manager or if unavailable, the ICH CEO, are identified as a contact person in the event that the ICH FIS Manager is not available and an approval is required or incident has occurred.

4. Procedure

4.1 Scheduling Visits

All ICH FIS Workers are expected to schedule service user visits so they can return to the office by 5pm. At times however, it may be necessary to undertake planned visits that commence after or continue past 5pm. These should however be an exception rather than the norm. Any such visits should be discussed with the ICH FIS Manager prior to the visit occurring. For this procedure, in the first instance the ICH FIS Manager is the contact person, however, refer to the contact person definition for guidance as to when the ICH FIS Manager is unavailable.

In all situations relating to this procedure, if the ICH FIS Manager is not available, the worker shall revert to the established alternative channels as per the contact person definition. That being, to seek advice from ICH FIS Senior Team Leaders and where approvals are required or an incident has occurred, contact the ICH OHC Manager and if not contactable, the ICH CEO.

ICH FIS workers must notify the ICH FIS Manager of any service user visits which are deemed high risk that will commence or are expected to conclude after 5pm. This includes cases where there is a pre-existing Risk Management Plan and in situations where a worker

is responding to a situation with a service user which may present with additional risks (e.g. supporting a parent to leave a domestic violence relationship).

4.2 Visits unexpected run over 5pm

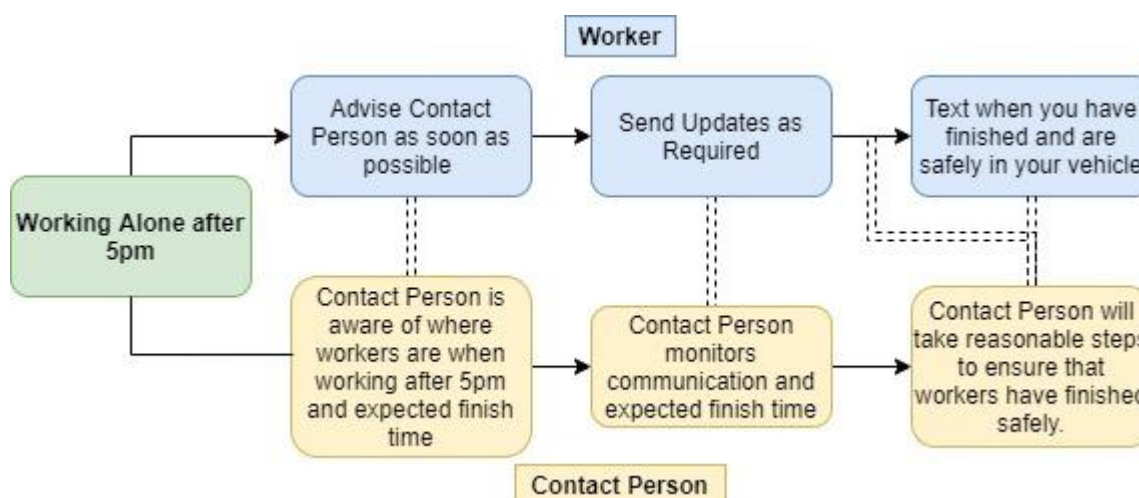
At times, visits which were planned to be completed before 5pm may run over due to unexpected events or crisis. In this event, the ICH FIS worker must contact the ICH FIS Manager to advise of the situation and likely time of return to the office. The ICH FIS worker must remain in contact with the ICH FIS Manager if things change and also advise if they need additional support.

4.3 Preference for Two Workers in the Office

If working after 5pm, ICH FIS workers are generally expected to work primarily in the office. Wherever possible, it is preferred that two people stay in the office together after 5pm and leave together at the same time. Where this occurs, this procedure does not apply.

4.4 Working Alone After 5pm

The below procedure applies when an ICH FIS worker is working alone after 5pm or expects to be working alone after that time:



- The ICH FIS Worker must pre-plan with the ICH FIS Manager (or contact person), where possible in the first instance and seek approval. Details of the ICH FIS worker's whereabouts including the service user's name and address and expected time of the visit including travel must be recorded in their diary.
- If the arrangement has not been pre-planned, the ICH FIS worker must notify the ICH FIS Manager (or contact person) as soon as possible. The ICH FIS worker must advise of their location (e.g., office or service user's name and address) and an expected return time to the office or their home.
- The ICH FIS worker must notify the ICH FIS Manager (or contact person) if plans change (e.g., change of location, expected finish time alters, risk level changes)

- The ICH FIS worker must text the ICH FIS Manager (or contact person) when they have finished work and are safely in their car.

ICH FIS workers must always carry their charged mobile phones (with a charge that is sufficient for its intended use and not less than 20% unless it is charging). This is particularly important while working alone (whether onsite or offsite). Mobile phones must also have the contact numbers registered for the ICH FIS Manager and other contact person.

The ICH FIS Worker must also carry a charged emergency duress alarm which is allocated to the vehicle. See ICH FIS Emergency Duress Alarm Procedure for details.

4.5 Contact Person

The relevant contact person should be:

- The ICH FIS Manager in the first instance
- An ICH FIS Senior Case Worker if the ICH FIS Manager is away or uncontactable
- The ICH OHC Manager and then the ICH CEO if the ICH FIS Manager and Senior Case Workers are away or uncontactable or if an approval is required or incident has occurred.

The contact person is responsible for ensuring that ICH FIS workers finish safely when working alone. The contact person is also responsible for contacting the ICH CEO if the ICH FIS worker is expected to stay in the office after 7pm to avoid unnecessary security alarms.

The contact person will monitor any subsequent communications from the ICH FIS worker after they have advised that they are alone (in case of an emergency or change in circumstances) and their expected finish time.

If an ICH FIS worker does not check in by their expected finish time, the contact person will call the worker within 20 minutes. If a worker does not respond, the contact person will call them within a further 10 minutes. If there is still no response, then the contact person shall take reasonable steps to ascertain that the worker is safe or if there is an emergency. This may include but is not limited to:

- Checking Deputy to determine if the worker has signed out (i.e., they have finished for the day and left their mobile behind)
- Calling the ICH FIS worker's personal phone number
- Using the Duress Alarm device to find a GPS location
- Arranging for someone to attend the office or contacting the service user if undertaking a visit
- Vehicle tracking (where available)
- Calling emergency services
- Informing the ICH CEO (if the CEO is not the designated contact person), who may check camera footage

- When other options have been exhausted, the ICH CEO may contact the worker's emergency contact/s.

4.6 Responsibilities

ICH FIS Workers must:

- Comply with this procedure
- Notify and provide updates to the contact person as required when working alone
- Carry their charged mobile phone and program the phone with the contact person's phone number

The ICH FIS Manager is responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of this procedure
- Ensuring communication takes place with the team regarding their availability to be the contact person

The Contact Person is responsible for:

- Being contactable for ICH FIS workers after 5pm (when it has been communicated to them that the worker is not expected to be back in the office by 5pm)
- Monitoring communication from ICH FIS workers and expected finish times
- Taking reasonable steps to verify that workers finish safely after 5pm

Failure to comply with this procedure may result in disciplinary action.

5. Review

This procedure shall be reviewed every five years or after any incidents occurring after 5pm.

6. Related Documents

Policies

ICH Workplace Health and Safety Policy

ICH Risk Management Policy

Procedures

ICH FIS Emergency Duress Procedure

ICH FIS Personal Safety in the Community Procedure

References

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)

Qld Human Services Quality Framework

Investment Specifications