

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 Inala Community House (ICH) Out of Home Care (OHC). For the purpose of this procedure, these persons shall be referred to as workers.

3. Definitions

Working alone: For the purposes of this procedure, refers to any-time after 5pm where work is performed without another worker present, either out 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 carer or child in care, whom services will be provided to.

Other Contact Person: Is an alternative responsible person who will step in where the ICH OHC Manager is unable to perform the duties outlined within this procedure e.g. where they are sick, on annual leave, etc. Where an other contact person is required to step in due to an approval being required or an incident occurring, this role will be filled by the following positions in the following order, subject to their individual availability:

1. ICH OHC Senior Caseworker
2. ICH CEO
3. ICH Family Intervention Service (FIS) Manager

4. Procedure

4.1 Scheduling Visits

All ICH OHC workers are expected to schedule service user visits in a way which allows them to be able to return to the office by 5pm. At times it may be necessary to undertake planned visits that continue past or commence after this time, however this should be an exception rather than the norm. Any such visits should be discussed with the ICH OHC Manager (or Other Contact Person) prior to the visit occurring.

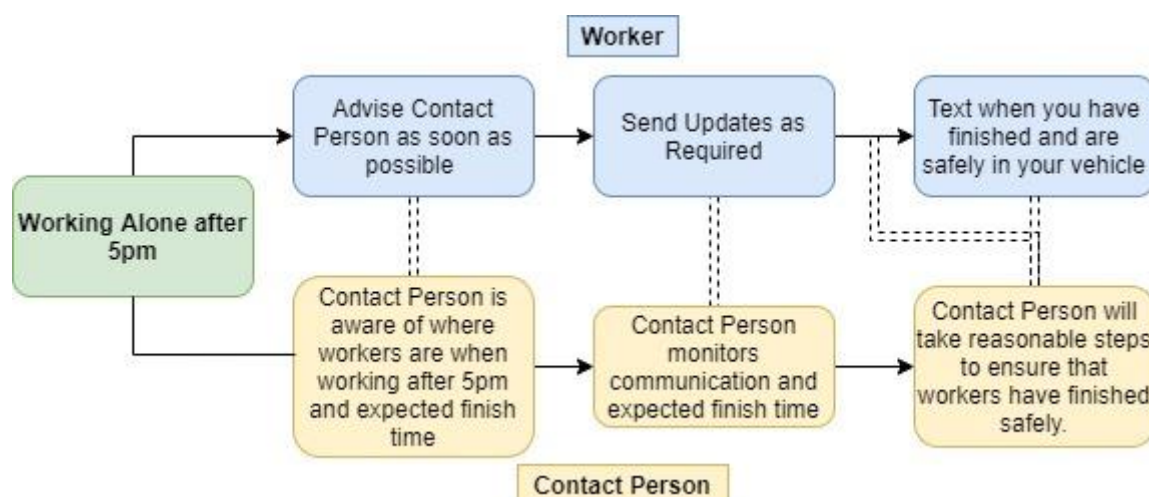
ICH OHC workers must notify the ICH OHC Manager of any service user visits which are deemed high risk and will commence or are expected to conclude after 5pm. This includes cases where there is a pre-existing Risk Management Plan, Safety plan, or support plan, and in situations where a worker is responding to a situation with a service user which may present with additional risks.

4.2 Preference for Two Workers in the Office

If working after 5pm, ICH OHC 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.

4.3 Working Alone After 5pm

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



- The ICH OHC Worker must pre-plan with the ICH OHC Manager (or Other Contact Person), where possible in the first instance and seek approval. Where this is pre-planned with the ICH OHC Manager but will need to be actioned by an Other Contact Person, the ICH OHC Worker is responsible for ensuring that they are also advised.
- Details of the ICH OHC 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 OHC worker must notify the ICH OHC Manager (or Other Contact Person) as soon as possible. The ICH OHC 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 OHC worker must notify the ICH OHC Manager (or Other Contact Person) if plans change (e.g., change of location, expected finish time alters, risk level changes).
- The ICH OHC worker must text the ICH OHC Manager (or Other Contact Person) when they have finished work and are safely in their car.

Examples of when it may be appropriate to work after 5pm:

- Completing a late home visit due to the availability of the service user
- A home visit that has occurred earlier in the shift but has taken longer than what was initially expected.
- The ICH OHC worker has been approved by the ICH OHC manager to work later than 5pm.

ICH OHC workers must always carry their mobile phone (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 OHC Manager and Other Contact Persons.

4.4 Other Contact Person

Once they have been made aware that the ICH OHC Manager is unavailable and that their support is required, an Other Contact Person is responsible for ensuring that ICH OHC workers finish safely when working alone. The Other Contact Person is also responsible for contacting the ICH CEO if the ICH OHC worker is expected to stay in the office after 7pm to avoid unnecessary security alarms.

The Other Contact Person will monitor any subsequent communications from the ICH OHC 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 OHC 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 Other Contact Person will call them within a further 10 minutes. If there is still no response, then the Other 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 OHC worker's personal phone number
- Using the Safety Alert device to find a GPS location
- Arranging for someone to attend the office or making contact with the service user if the worker was conducting a visit
- Vehicle tracking (where available)
- 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.
- Calling emergency services

4.5 Responsibilities

ICH OHC 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 ensure all relevant contact numbers have been saved
- Remain contactable at all times

The ICH OHC Manager is responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of this procedure
- Ensuring that Other Contact Persons are also aware of their responsibilities under this procedure and also when they may be expected to perform the responsibilities outlined within this procedure.

Other Contact Persons are responsible for:

- Remaining contactable for ICH OHC 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 OHC workers and expected finish times
- Taking reasonable steps to verify that workers finish safely after 5pm once notified that this is required.

Failure to comply with this procedure may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

5. Review

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

6. Related Documents

Policies

ICH Workplace Health and Safety Policy
ICH Risk Management Policy

Procedures

ICH OHC Emergency Duress Procedure
ICH OHC Personal Safety in the Community Procedure