

**WORKING ALONE****Procedure 5.5.55**

Policy No. and Title	5.5	Conditions of Employment Policy
Procedure	5.5.55	Working Alone
Version	1	
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**1 OBJECTIVE**

To protect employees against harm to their health, safety and welfare through the elimination or minimisation of risks arising from working alone.

**2 STATEMENT**

- a) Because of the increased use of technology or the requirements of the process, the number of employees who work in remote areas or on their own away from their work base is growing. Although the tasks they carry out may be no more hazardous than those carried out at the work base, the consequences arising from injuries can be more serious.
- b) The severity of the risk to lone workers is increased primarily because they are vulnerable to illness, accident or assault. Assistance will also take longer to arrive and range from first aid and emergency medical attention, fire brigade and police as well as assistance from the Supervisor.
- c) It is acknowledged that from time-to-time a number of Council employees will be required, by necessity, to work alone.
- d) While all employees working alone could be at risk, the risks to certain employees by nature of their duties or location could be considered greater, e.g. an employee working alone in a remote and sparsely populated location, or an enforcement officer such as a Ranger working alone in an urban setting being confronted by a hostile resident. These employees face specific but a different range of hazards as a consequence of working alone.

**3 RESPONSIBILITIES****3.1 Person Conducting a Business Undertaking (PCBU)**

- a) Are to ensure Managers and workers are aware of the potential hazards associated with working alone.
- b) Are to review the workplace operations to ensure the requirements for workers working alone and in remote areas are kept to a minimum.
- c) Are to recognise that before workers are required to work alone and in relatively remote areas that there are appropriate risk management procedures in place.

**3.2 Managers**

- a) Are to ensure that before a worker is permitted to work alone, particularly in remote areas, there is in place an appropriate set of risk management procedures to cover the particular risks associated with working alone.

- b) Are to ensure there is in place an arrangement which ensures the worker working alone has been given the relevant information and, as required, been provided with the appropriate instructions and training.
- c) Are responsible for ensuring the following procedures are implemented within their workgroup and the risk of working alone is minimised by planning.

### **3.3 Supervisors**

- a) Are responsible for ensuring tasks are carried out according to procedures.
- b) Are to ensure workers who are required to work alone, particularly in remote areas, are aware of the potential hazards associated with the activity and its location.
- c) Are to ensure the worker has been trained to use any special emergency arrangements including any communications equipment.
- d) Are to ensure there is in place an arrangement for the testing, maintenance and repair of any communication equipment which has been provided to worker as a risk control measure for working alone.

### **3.4 Workers**

- a) Are responsible for carrying out all activities in a safe manner in accordance with procedures and training undertaken.
- b) Are to ensure all equipment, including communication equipment which is required as a risk management procedure for working alone, is tested before leaving the work-base.
- c) Are to ensure they are aware of the specific hazards they could face and risk management procedures required for the particular locations where they are required to work alone.

## **4 PROCEDURE**

- a) The Supervisor must consult with staff about working alone.
- b) The Supervisor and employee must identify all activities and locations where an employee could be required to work alone.
- c) A risk assessment for the work activity and a SWMS must be developed where necessary.
- d) Factors which should be considered:
  - i) The time and remoteness of the worker's work area;
  - ii) The risk priority ranking of the task undertaken;
  - iii) The availability and provision of first aid and other emergency equipment;
  - iv) Alternative and back-up arrangements to communicate between the location and work-base;
  - v) The ease and speed of communication between the worker, the work-base and emergency services;
  - vi) The range of options available for communications between the location and the work-base;

- vii) The existence of communication inconsistency such as valleys, mountains, etc;
  - viii) The physical ability and health of the worker;
  - ix) The training of the worker in the communication and emergency equipment, and
  - x) Implementation of the control measures identified according to an agreed time frame.
- e) Possible control measures may include:
- i) Reviewing the operations required, the timing of those operations and the need for working alone;
  - ii) Provision of suitable and/or specialised first aid equipment and emergency equipment, either moved with the employee in a vehicle or pre-positioned in storage sheds at the work area;
  - iii) Dealing with 'tricky' situation training;
  - iv) Communication procedures to monitor the safety of the employee, i.e. regular report-in times;
  - v) Where appropriate contingency planning to respond to failure to report in as required;
  - vi) Communications equipment that does not suffer from inconsistent links;
  - vii) Links to emergency services to pre-identify dangerous areas for worker to work;
  - viii) Provision of information, instruction, training and supervision.
  - ix) Improved skills in first aid and emergency management may be necessary for workers working alone so that they can manage a situation until support and assistance arrives;
  - x) Formally recording the process, or
  - xi) Monitor and review of the process.
- f) These lists are not exhaustive and other factors and measures may need to be considered.

## **5 REFERENCES**

Work Health and Safety Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.

## **VARIATION**

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this procedure which will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is relevant and appropriate.