

**INTERNAL ONLY**  
**ISLHD PROCEDURE**  
**COVER SHEET**



**Health**  
Illawarra Shoalhaven  
Local Health District

<b>NAME OF DOCUMENT</b>	Staff Working Onsite in Isolation
<b>TYPE OF DOCUMENT</b>	Procedure
<b>DOCUMENT NUMBER</b>	ISLHD CORP PROC 22
<b>DATE OF PUBLICATION</b>	September 2019
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<b>REVIEW DATE</b>	September 2024
<b>FORMER REFERENCE(S)</b>	ISLHD OPS PROC 17
<b>EXECUTIVE SPONSOR or EXECUTIVE CLINICAL SPONSOR</b>	Executive Director Strategic Improvement Programs
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Work Health and Safety Coordinator
<b>KEY TERMS</b>	WHS Risk Management, Working in Isolation, Working Alone
<b>FUNCTIONAL GROUP OR HUB</b>	District Wide
<b>NSQHS STANDARD</b>	Standard One
<b>SUMMARY</b>	This procedure is to assist departments/services in identifying and controlling risks to staff safety when working onsite alone and in isolation.

**COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY**

Feedback about this document can be sent to [ISLHD-CorporateGovernance@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ISLHD-CorporateGovernance@health.nsw.gov.au)

**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

This Procedure has been developed to promote safety and maximise the wellbeing of all Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) workers when working onsite, either in isolation or alone. Staff working offsite or travelling between locations, whether alone or in groups, are to refer to [ISLHD OPS PROC 28](#) Staff Working off Site.

**2. BACKGROUND**

Staff working onsite who are alone in isolation may face a number of additional risks to health and safety. These risks include managing clients or members of the public without the presence of other staff, and having reduced access to support services should a workplace emergency, accident or incident occur.

Staff that work alone in isolation whilst performing high-risk tasks should also have specific procedures in place should a workplace emergency, accident or incident occur. The procedure provides generic information due to the broad range of services and locations that ISLHD workers may work, alone and in isolation, and predominately covers risk identification and control.

**3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

**3.1 Workers must:**

- Comply with procedures for working onsite alone in isolation and any measures put in place to minimise the risk to staff working alone in isolation.
- Participate in the ISLHD Work Health and Safety risk management process to ensure they meet their obligations under the WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation 2017.
- Be mindful and alert to any safety issues regarding working onsite alone in isolation.

**3.2 Line Managers must:**

- Implement and comply with the ISLHD Staff Working Onsite in Isolation procedure.
- Ensure risks are managed identified, assessed and controlled.
- Ensure workers are consulted at each step of the risk management process.
- Ensure workers receive the training and resources they need to carry out their WHS responsibilities competently.

**3.3 General Managers/ Service Directors must:**

- Apply due diligence by monitoring the implementation of the ISLHD Staff Working Onsite Alone in Isolation procedure.

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- Monitor the implementation of this procedure to ensure that it is effective and appropriate.
- Ensure workers receive the training and resources they need to carry out their WHS responsibilities competently.

**3.4 Chief Executive must:**

- Ensure appropriate information, training and education are developed to ensure safe systems of work.
- Ensure that ISLHD Working Onsite Alone in Isolation Procedures are current and revised according to changes in legislation, NSW Health Policy Directives or as a result of internal and external audits and continuous improvement activities.

**4. PROCEDURE**

All workplaces must identify any work processes which require staff, students, volunteers or contractors to work alone and where they would be unable to readily summon assistance in the event of injury, illness, violence or other emergency situation. Information Sheet - Working Alone Risk Assessment Resource may assist with the identification of these processes and identify controls for potential hazards.

Where a department does not already have a system in place to monitor staff working alone, they should use ISLHD OPS F105 – Working Alone in Isolation Log

The following risk management approach must be implemented in consultation with the persons involved and the Health and Safety Representative (where applicable) prior to undertaking work alone or in isolation:

- Identify potential hazards associated with the work
- Eliminate risks to health and safety so far as is reasonably practicable
- If unable to eliminate risks, conduct a risk assessment to determine the control measures required to minimise the risks
- Implement control measures. Consideration should include:
  - identifying and designating a contact person/s
  - identifying the frequency and method of contact required
  - arrangements for rescue, medical and emergency assistance
  - preparing any Safe Working Procedures (SWP's) required
  - Obtaining an authority to perform work alone or in isolation.
- Risk Assessments must be reviewed 1 month after the controls have been implemented, then annually to ensure that the control measures remain effective.

Review and improve control measures where results indicate the existing control measures do not control the risk.

#### **4.1 Low risk working alone**

Where employees, students, volunteers or contractors are undertaking office/computer based work or work having been assessed as low risk, the following must be the minimum controls undertaken:

- Persons working back or coming in outside of normal working hours in a site that has a security presence, must always advise Security or Senior Staff that they are in the facility/site and again when they are leaving.
- Persons working back or coming in outside of normal working hours in a site / service that does not have a security presence must advise a senior staff member and arrange to have a contact person that is advised, by phone, of arrival and leaving times.
- Personal security measures must be undertaken, eg:
  - Lock doors, walk in well-lit areas, and request a security escort as required.

#### **4.2 High Risk Tasks**

High Risk Tasks, when working alone or isolation – may include but are not limited:

- Working with electricity
- Mental health clients
- Working in contact with the Public
- Confined or difficult to reach areas
- Working at heights
- Using heavy machinery
- Handling moneys
- Handling drugs
- Working with hazardous chemicals
- Biomedical hazards etc

Where a high-risk task is to be undertaken alone, a WHS Risk Assessment (ISLHD CORP F45) must be completed in consultation with the workers involved. This may include but is not limited to:

- Accessing or leaving the site
- Medical and emergency assistance required and the availability of those resources if outside normal working hours
- The level of supervision required
- Possible consequences of unattended substances, equipment
- Level of training of the person involved
- Security of the area
- Means of communication in the area
- Disclosure and consideration of any pre-existing medical conditions that may

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give rise to a dangerous or life threatening situation when working alone.

The risk assessment is to be documented and retained for audit purposes.

#### **4.3 Reporting**

Any incident or near miss that occurs when working alone must be reported to line manager and recorded in Incident Information Management System (IIMS).

### **5. DOCUMENTATION**

- [WHS Risk Assessment](#)
- [Information Sheet – Working alone Risk Assessment Resource](#)

### **6. AUDIT**

Compliance with this procedure will be audited through Ministry of Health WHS Audit Tool at least every two years.

### **7. REFERENCES**

External references

- [NSW Health Policy Directive Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures PD2018\\_013](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)
- [Code of Practice – How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks](#)
- [Protecting People and Property: NSW Health Policy and standards for Security Risk Management in NSW Health Agencies June 2013](#)

### **8. REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision No.</b>	<b>Author and Approval</b>
March 2011	0	Occupational Safety Officer Approved by the WHS and IM Managers meeting (28/2/11)
September 2015	1	Safety and Well-Being Manager ISLHD Safety Management System Review and Implementation Approved by Executive Management Committee April 2015
May 2019	2	ISLHD Safety Coordinator People, Safety and Culture SMS Review

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September 2019	2	Approval/Date: Policy Recommendation Committee – September 2019
		Approval/Date: Executive Director Strategic Improvement Programs – September 2019