**APPROVED LEVEL: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVAL BY: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**WORKING ALONE AND EMPLOYEE PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY**

**Scope**

The [BUSINESS NAME] is committed to the principle that where employees work alone, the risks to their health and safety will be reduced as far as reasonably possible.

The following safe practice standards have been adapted to address the risks associated with working alone.

These standards apply to all employees working in the [BUSINESS NAME], as well as students and volunteers associated with the [BUSINESS NAME]. All employees should be aware of these policies.

Employee Personal Safety Policies include:

1. Working Alone Flowchart
2. Working Alone – Effective De-Escalation Techniques
3. Working Alone Safely Procedures
4. Travel and Personal Safety Procedures

APPENDICES

* Appendix 1 – Definitions

# **Working Alone Safely Procedures**

All new employees, students and volunteers who work alone shall be oriented to program policies and procedures regarding working alone.

New employees, and those re-entering active employment after 6 months’ absence shall receive orientation on working alone safely.

The orientation for Working Alone Safely should include:

* Policies and Procedures related to Working Alone
* Tools and protocols e.g. flow sheets
* Program and specific site orientation as it applies to working alone safely e.g. driving hazards, environmental hazards

*Potential High Risk Areas for Working Alone:*

* Travel in the community in all types of weather
* Home visits for any reason, especially initial or high risk visits
* Community visits e.g. seniors residences, community agencies
* Meeting clients and patients alone in public places

*Safety Tips at Clinic Site:*

* If fearful to leave building or approach vehicle in a parking lot, call 911
* Use buddy system when leaving building (walk with and/or inform another clinic staff)

*Safety Tips for Consideration when Visiting a Family:*

* Wear clothing that does not attract undue attention.
* Wear comfortable clothing – including shoes you can run in.
* Leave expensive items (e.g. jewelry, clothing, etc.) at home.
* Think about any article of clothing that could be used to cause you harm, e.g. necklaces, neckties, scarves, earrings, glasses, etc.)
* Carry a small pouch (rather than a purse) with ID and only a small amount of cash – no credit cards.
* When you approach the home, knock on the door and stand to one side.
* If you hear a dog barking, ask if the animal is restrained and how it reacts to strangers.
* Avoid making unannounced visits, if possible. You could be interrupting illegal activity, invading privacy or showing a lack of respect – all could put you at risk.

*In Home Assessment****:***

* Don’t enter the home, or finish the visit, if a client or others in the home are inappropriately dressed, appear to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, or are openly hostile.
* Don’t enter the home (or stay) if there is someone making you feel uncomfortable. Are you apprehensive, nervous and fearful of this client?
* Leave the home immediately if you start to feel afraid, or believe your safety may be at risk.
* Be aware of exits, and make sure you are between the client and door. Use your judgment whether or not a door should be left open/unlocked.
* Do not stand if client sits; do not sit if client stands.
* If you go upstairs, follow the client, rather than be followed.
* Avoid sitting on beds or soft couches that may be difficult to get up from. If there is no firm chair, sit on the edge of the couch.

# **Travel and Personal Safety**

Procedures and safety measures are available and in place to address employees’ personal safety and security when traveling alone during working hours. Travel is identified as one of the hazards of working alone.

*For All Visits:*

* Prior to visiting/contact with the client, staff should assess the risk.
* Ideally, all staff should have access to a cell phone that they take to each home visit.
* Schedules shall contain location of where individual is working alone.
* If a risk is evident, staff should develop a Safe Plan for visit and discuss with the Clinical Leader and/or designate.
* If a risk occurs during the visit, three options should be considered:

1. Determine type of risk and whether it is safe to continue visit.
2. If there is any question of personal safety, get out of the home/risk situation.
3. Call 911, if indicated.

* All staff should report to a buddy (designate) at the end of the home visit/client contact, when working alone.
* Be aware of the hazards involved in the regular course of carrying out their duties, as relevant to their position both during and outside of regular working hours.
* Understand the risks of working alone.
* Be involved in the risk assessment and preparation of the safety plan, which includes the risk control measures and emergency arrangements.
* Be required to participate in safety plan development.

Appendix 1 – **Definitions**

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| **Imminent Danger** | A danger, which is not normal for the occupation; or a danger under which an individual engaged in that occupation would not normally carry out that work. |
| **Threat** | An expression of an intention to inflict something harmful; an indication of impending danger or harm regarded as a possible danger. |
| **Violence** | The attempted or actual exercise by a person of any physical force so as to cause injury to an individual, and includes any threatening statement or behavior which gives reasonable cause to believe that an individual is as risk of injury. |
| **Unsafe Situation** | A situation or incident which puts an individual at risk from physical, verbal, emotional or sexual harassment or assault. |
| **Readily Available** | As it applies to working alone in interpreted to mean that *“visual contact” between workers is maintained.* |
| **Working Alone** | To work alone in a worksite where assistance is not readily available in the event of injuries, illness or emergency. |
| **Working in Isolation** | A worker is considered to be working in isolation when alone at the work location and therefore engaged in activities considered potentially hazardous.  Also, due to the environment or distance, the worker cannot be routinely monitored at appropriate intervals by a supervisor or another worker who is in a safe location. |
| **Work Site** | Is a location where there is or is likely to be, a worker doing work as part of their occupation. For workers who may work out of their vehicle, any vehicle or mobile equipment used by the worker as part of the job is considered part of the work site. |
| **Dr. White** | Dr. White is a code name to indicate a crisis requiring assistance. The staff member calls the [BUSINESS NAME] office with any phrase feasible using **“Dr. White”** as the **subject**, such as “Tell Dr. White I am running late for my appointment.” |