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| **LONE WORKER POLICY** |
| **Introduction**  The Committee of Management (COM) of Upper Murray Regional Neighbourhood House Network (UMRNHN) is committed to workplace health and safety for all staff working for the Network.  **Purpose**  This policy has been developed to provide guidance for the COM to minimise, as far as practicable, risks associated with working alone when engaged in activities for the Network.  **Scope**  This policy applies to all work carried out in the Network Coordinator’s home office, while travelling on Network business, and any other sites where the Network Coordinator or volunteers acting on behalf of the URM Network are working alone.  All staff and UMR Network volunteers are covered by the policy requirements when working alone. It has particular relevance to the Network Coordinator, whose role requires that they may be frequently working in isolated circumstances.  **Definitions**  ***Working Alone*** – a worker can be considered to be working alone if there is a reasonable expectation that a call for assistance will not or cannot be responded to and the worker’s absence may not be noticed for some time. Risks to workers may be higher when they are working alone. A fall, exposure to dangerous chemicals or an assault can have very different consequences if a worker is alone than if the victim has a co-worker(s) or capable assistants in the immediate vicinity. The degree of risk will determine the level of protection the worker needs.  ***Workplace –*** where a staff member usually works. This may include an office and a vehicle.  ***Staff –*** refers to any person undertaking paid or unpaid work on behalf of the UMRNHN.  **Policy**  The URMNHN COM recognise that employing a single staff member means that person will often be in a position where they will be working alone.  Where feasible, the position of Network Coordinator will be housed in an office that is co-located with other organisations/businesses, and therefore has other people close by.  Where this is not possible, for example where the Network Coordinator works from a home-based office, every effort will be made to ensure that the environment is safe, and that communication links to emergency services are accessible and in working order.  **Associated documents**  Workplace Health and Safety Policy  **Authorisation**  UMRNHN Committee of Management Chair  Name:  Date of approval: |
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| **LONE WORKER PROCEDURES** |
| **Responsibilities**  Compliance with this Working Alone Policy and the implementation of the following procedures is the responsibility of the UMRNHN Committee of Management.  Staff are responsible for taking all reasonably practical steps to ensure their own safety and security when working alone. This includes following the requirements of these procedures and any additional procedures deemed necessary.  **Procedures**  Staff who must work alone as defined above:   1. Must do a risk assessment (see Appendix) to determine the nature and extent of risks posed by working alone in their particular work situation and must put in place appropriate control measures to keep themselves safe. This risk assessment must be signed off by the Committee of Management. 2. Must have quick access to a mobile phone with which they can call a family member, friend and/or the relevant Emergency Services direct. The Network Coordinator position is supplied with a mobile phone. 3. Must take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety while working alone. This includes operating such equipment or machinery as they are qualified and experienced to use and that is safe to operate by one person. 4. Must inform an appropriate family member or friend when working alone out of normal work hours (for example, travelling back from an event at night).The staff member should phone this person on arrival at the event and when they are leaving the event. 5. Must carry some form of identification.   Note that staff should generally not work alone in environments where any high-risk hazards exist.  Common work alone situations where staff may be at risk include:   * Staff who work from a home-based office, where home may be located in an isolated area with limited mobile telephone coverage * Staff who travel by car for work, often long distances and at night   **Note:** No individual, who has a medical condition that may give rise to a life-threatening situation, may work alone without notifying the Committee of Management of the condition.  Authorisation  UMRNHN Committee of Management Chair  Name:  Date of approval: |

**APPENDIX - RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

The risk factors that need to be assessed by the Committee of Management and staff before granting a person permission to work alone include:

1. Suitability of the individual (physical, mental and work experience) to work alone
2. Nature and condition of any equipment, tools or items to be handled
3. Presence and handling of dangerous substances e.g. toxic chemicals, flammable liquids, corrosive substances, explosive substances
4. Work environment – remoteness, lack of mobile phone coverage, possible unprovoked violence due to presence of unwanted persons
5. Emergency arrangements, particularly the summoning of assistance for first aid
6. Communication systems – use of mobile telephone, pager, two-way radio etc.

**Person’s Suitability**

The medical condition of the individual, including any disability, however minor such as impaired hearing or sight, may rule out working alone. The ability of the individual to deal with foreseeable injury accidents, fire and periods of personal isolation needs to be assessed.

**Machinery, Equipment, Materials or Handled Items**

Particular attention needs to be given to work involving dangerous machines, electrical safety, hazardous and dangerous substances and manual handling.

**Environment**

Safe access to the work area is important so that adequate illumination is provided day and night. The security arrangements to control the possible access of unwanted persons need to be considered. The remoteness of the work area may be such that emergency response would be unacceptably delayed.

**Emergency**

Where emergency facilities are inaccessible, for example working in remote locations, lone workers should be trained to use and be provided with a first aid kit. In certain situations, the use of personal alarms may be appropriate.

**Communications**

The lone worker may wish to report to a supervisor (eg COM Chairperson) or designated responsible person such as a family member on a regular basis to confirm his/her well being. This could be done using an internal phone, mobile phone or pager at regular intervals or at an agreed frequency that is varied according to the risk of particular tasks. Such arrangements provide a means to summon aid in an emergency.

**Supervision**

Although lone workers cannot be constantly supervised, there is a duty on the COM to provide appropriate control of the work. In addition, information, training and instruction needs to be provided to ensure the risks are understood by the lone worker and the necessary safety precautions are carried out.