

Working Alone Policy

1. Rationale or background to policy:

Staff Working Alone poses a hazard risk for employees should there be an emergency thus CPLF takes precautions to promote a safe working environment.

2. Policy Statement:

CPLF staff may at times be Working Alone. During this time, employees need to have resources and/or strategies to be able to work in a safe and secure manner, without fear of personal safety.

3. Procedures: Guidance in support of day-to-day decisions

“Working Alone” is defined as having no one available who is able to contact 911 in case of emergency. If there is another staff, a client, a family member, a person in the community, etc. who is able to do so, a staff is not considered to be working alone. Staff are to have a way to contact emergency services 911 at all times. This may include but is not limited to having a cell phone on them.

Possible Strategies to Adopt:

- Schedule high risk tasks during normal business hours, or when another worker is capable of helping if an emergency situation arises.
- Regular check in times with another person. This person may be a case manager, another support staff (community or residential), the clients family member, etc.
- Allow the use of a “buddy system” in high risk situations – ensure that staff are aware that this option is available to them.
- Where appropriate, use a security system such as video surveillance cameras, mirrors, observation windows, etc., however, ensure that informed consent is obtained from employees prior to use.

Workplace Hazard Assessment:

Factors to consider when assessing workplace situations. The following are some points to consider. Each circumstance will be different.

1. Length of time the worker will be working alone:

- Is it reasonable for the worker to be alone at all?
- How long will the worker be alone to finish the job?
- What time of the day will the worker be alone?

2. Communication:

- What forms of communication are available?
- Will emergency communication systems work properly in all situations?

3. Location of the work:

- Is the work in a remote or isolated location? (Remember, a remote location does not have to be far away. Storage rooms that are rarely used can be considered remote or isolated.)
- Is transportation necessary to get there? What kind of transportation is needed?
- Is the work area equipped with emergency supplies such as: food, drinking water and first aid kit?
- Will the worker need to carry some or all of the emergency supplies with him/her when leaving the vehicle?
- Will the worker have to leave the vehicle for long periods of time?

4. Type or nature of work:

- Is there adequate training and education provided for the worker to be able to work alone safely?
- If personal protective equipment is required, is it available, is it in good working order, and has the worker been trained in its use, care and storage?
- What machinery, tools or equipment will be used?
- Is there a high-risk activity involved?
- Is fatigue likely to be a factor?
- Are there extremes of temperature?
- Is there risk of an animal attack, or poisoning/allergic reaction from insect/animal bites?
- If the worker is working inside a locked building, how will emergency services be able to get in?

5. Characteristics of the individual who is working alone:

- Are there pre-existing medical conditions that may increase the risk?
- Does the worker have adequate levels of experience and training?

CPLF Administration employees are to advise the after hours line that they are at the office and what time they expect to leave. When they leave the office, they are to report to the after hours line that they have done so. If the administration employee does not report that they have left or are extending their stay within an hour of their given time, the after hours line is to call the employee. If the employee does not answer, the after hours line is to report the incident to Police.