COUNCIL POLICY

Title: Remote and Isolated Workers

Responsible Officer: Deputy Chief Executive Officer **Version:** Current

1. PURPOSE

The Shire is committed to ensuring that an effective means of communication is available which will enable any worker who is performing remote or isolated work to call for assistance in the event of an emergency.

The Shire is also committed to ensuring that a process is available for regular contact to be made with the worker and that the worker is trained in the process.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Shire worksites where there are workers who perform remote or isolated work.
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3. DEFINITIONS

4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This policy links to core drivers:

1. Relationships that bring us tangible benefits (to the Shire and our community)
2. Our lifestyle and strong sense of community
3. We are prepared for opportunities and we are innovative to ensure our relevancy and destiny

5. POLICY STATEMENT

Working Alone After Regular Working Hours

Workers are to ensure that their immediate Supervisor is aware that they intend to be working alone after regular working hours. The Supervisor must be advised of the location where the work is intended to be performed, the nature of the work, and the approximate finishing time. Once work has been completed the worker is to advise their supervisor.

Failure to advise the Supervisor that the worker has safely completed the task at hand will result in progressive implementation of response in accordance with pre-agreed timeframes and actions.

Depending upon the nature of the after-hours work which is required to be conducted, additional staff may be required in order to ensure health and safety.

Remote or Isolated Work

A worker is performing remote or isolated work when they are performing work that is isolated from the assistance of other persons because of location, time or nature of the work.

At times workers may be required to work in remote or isolated areas where conventional communications methods (mobile phones, radios, land lines) are ineffective. All personnel, when working in remote or isolated areas must be able to contact the necessary assistance should there be an emergency. This may require alternative methods of communication to be considered.

Shire vehicles are fitted with appropriate communications platforms to ensure that ability to make contact is maintained at all times. Workers should make sure that their communication equipment is working effectively prior to, and following, deployment and report any problems to their supervisor at the earliest possible time.

Workers who have regular contact with members of the public as part of their work are not considered “alone”. However it is recognised that contact with members of the public may in itself pose risks and appropriate risk control measures will be implemented in accordance with the situation that exists.

There is no set minimum time for a worker to be on their own to be considered “alone”, each situation must be considered specific to the relevant factors including the nature of the work, the location, the time of the day, the competencies of the worker, the duration of the tasks being performed and the communication systems available.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should be completed by the worker and Supervisor to identify all hazards associated with any remote or isolated work aspects of the task to be completed. Risks must then be assessed and managed in accordance with legislative requirements.

All workers are responsible for taking reasonable measures to ensure their own safety and personal security when working in isolation, including compliance with all Shire systems of work and communication requirements.

Communication Method

The means of communication will depend on the circumstances and the risks inherent in the work.

Communication systems may include fixed phones, mobile phones, two-way radio, personal locating beacons or satellite phones. The means of communication to be employed will be appropriately maintained and tested, prior to deployment, to ensure that the system remains operational and effective.

Communications Process

As the Shire conducts operations over a diverse range of conditions and geographical locations, definition of a single communications procedure to fit all circumstances where an remote or isolated worker may be engaged is impracticable.

The following general process will be applied as a methodology to achieving the organizational aim of a legislatively compliant and safe workplace:

- Assess the work situation pre-deployment, including:
    - Geographical location
    - Whether workers will be performing remote or isolated work
    - Determine viable communications methods for the situation – including communications systems test for effectiveness
- Determine an appropriate call in schedule;

- Determine an action schedule which will be progressively implemented in the instance of a scheduled call in being missed;
- Determine the system of work that will be utilised to minimise risks; and
- Ensure that all persons involved in the remote or isolated work are trained in the system of work that will be implemented, including effective communications which are to be utilised, and are fully aware of what actions will be initiated in the event of a scheduled call in failing to be logged.

Responsibilities

Shire Management Responsibilities

The Shire is responsible for ensuring legislative requirements associated with remote or isolated workers at the workplace are fulfilled, including provision of adequate resources to fulfil these requirements and maintenance of associated records in accordance with designated timeframes.

Shire Supervisors Responsibilities

Shire Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring remote or isolated worker management practices are subject to a risk assessment process and that safe systems of work are subsequently effectively implemented within their area of control, so as to assist the Shire in fulfilling their legislative obligations

All Personnel on Site Responsibilities

All persons within the Shire are responsible for conforming to the remote and isolated worker risk management processes and associated safe systems of work, so as to assist the Shire in fulfilling their legislative obligations

6. RELATED LEGISLATION/ DOCUMENTATION

- Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)
- Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (WA)
- AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018, Risk Management – Principles and guidelines.
- Guidance Note: Working Alone, WorkSafe WA Commission (2009)

7. REVIEW DETAILS

Council Adoption	Date	16th August 2022	Resolution #	MIN 123/22
Previous Adoption	Date		Resolution #	