



Fatal Risk Procedure

Working Alone or Remotely

(HSE)

Document Number: A3795409



Excellence



Honesty



Accountability



Courage



Caring

Working Alone or Remotely Procedure



Approved: 20 November 2020

Review due: November 2023

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Approved: 20 November 2020

Review due: November 2023

1. Objective

The aim of this Procedure is to ensure our workers are safe when working alone or remotely by defining communication requirements for all of GMW employees, contractors and other persons when working alone or remotely.

2. Scope

This Procedure applies to all Goulburn-Murray Water staff including contractors on GMW controlled worksites.

3. Procedure

Working alone or remotely is work that is isolated from the assistance from other people because of the location, time or nature of the work being done. Assistance from other people includes rescue, medical assistance and emergency services.

Workers are considered working alone or remotely when they are:

- Working in the field, or
- Working alone at home or in an office.

Working alone or remotely increases the risk of any job.

All GMW Divisions must complete a Working Alone or Remotely Risk Assessment (covered in section 3.2 of this procedure) and Emergency Response Plan (A3826124) (covered in section 3.5 of this procedure) before working alone or remotely.

3.1 Fatal Risk

Working alone or remotely is a fatal risk for GMW. All workers must:

- Ensure that someone in GMW knows where they are, what their travel plans are and when to initiate an emergency response;
- Assess potential hazards and associated risks when entering remote areas or when working alone;
- Not conduct any work alone or in a remote area without authorization from manager or supervisor;
- Establish a daily communication plan with their supervisor or designated contact before conducting work alone or remotely;
- Ensure communications are established when working alone or entering a remote area; and
- Ensure sufficient planning is completed to ensure correct PPE for working alone or remotely is available.



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To manage the risks associated with working alone or remotely activities at GMW worksites, GMW will:

- Conduct and document risk assessments to identify all reasonably foreseeable hazards in relation to working alone or remotely;
- Ensure where GMW cannot eliminate risk, effective and appropriate control measures are implemented, maintained, monitored and reviewed in line with the hierarchy of controls;
- Plan and organise work to manage the risks of working alone or remotely including alternatives for where working alone or remotely is not permitted;
- Ensure before any work commences, appropriate permission and approval processes are applied to validate the risks and controls related to working alone or remotely;
- Ensure persons authorising or supervising work are competent and trained in relevant work procedures;
- Develop and implement training frameworks to ensure all workers impacted are provided with appropriate information, instruction and training on risks and controls for working alone and remotely. This includes First Aid training for those who routinely work alone as part of their roster.
- Establish and test specific Emergency Response Plans and plans for all working alone situations and communication equipment;
- Introduce, monitor and maintain technology such as individual working alone monitoring devices to augment Emergency Response Plans where applicable; and
- Supply and maintain suitable plant and equipment for workers to reduce the likelihood of working alone or remotely work-related incidents. This includes a requirement for every GMW vehicle to carry a First Aid Kit.

This procedure provides a framework for GMW managers and staff to address and reduce risks as low as reasonably practicable for working alone or remotely. It aims to make sure staff are safe during working hours, reduce the likelihood of an incident, injury/illness or serious event and provide a system for assistance to be provided as soon as possible.

3.2 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment must be completed before any working alone or remote work can commence to ensure that all potential risks are identified and adequately controlled. The Risk Assessment can be completed on the corporate Risk Assessment template (A411001).

The Risk Assessment is to be reviewed:

- annually;
- before a new working alone or remotely activity occurs; and
- after a working alone or remotely incident occurs.



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The following factors must be considered when assessing the risks involved with remote or isolated work:

FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN ASSESSING RISKS OF WORKING ALONE OR REMOTELY	
THE LENGTH OF TIME THE WORKER MAY BE WORKING ALONE OR REMOTELY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long does the worker need to be working alone or remotely to finish the job?
THE TIME OF DAY WHEN WORKING ALONE OR REMOTELY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there an increased risk at certain times of day? (e.g. working at night may pose a greater risk of exposure to violence)
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What forms of communication does the worker have access to? Are there procedures for regular contact with the worker? Will the emergency communication system work properly in all situations? Has it been tested?
THE LOCATION OF THE WORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where is the work? What is likely to happen if there is a vehicle breakdown? Office fire? Intruder?
THE NATURE OF THE WORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What machinery, tools and equipment may be used? Are high risk activities involved? (e.g. work at heights, work with electricity/hazardous chemicals/ plant) Is fatigue likely to increase risk? (e.g. work with long hours driving a vehicle or operating machinery) Is there an increased risk of violence or aggression when workers have to deal with clients or customers by themselves? Can environmental factors affect the safety of the worker? (e.g. exposure to extreme heat or cold environments) Is there risk of attack by an animal (including insects)?
THE CAPABILITIES OF THE WORKER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the worker have a pre-existing medical condition that may increase risk? (e.g. allergies to insect bites etc.)



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Once the risks associated with working alone or remotely have been identified, appropriate controls measures must be implemented before authorisation for the work to commence can be considered. Example control measures for consideration include:

EXAMPLE CONTROL MEASURES FOR WORKING ALONE OR REMOTELY	
BUDDY SYSTEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some jobs present such a risk that workers should not work alone
COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The default communication system for working alone and remotely in the field will be the mobile phone GAP application The type of communication system chosen will depend on the distance from the base and the environment where the worker will be located or travelling through Expert advice and local knowledge may be needed to assist with the selection of an effective communication system In situations where a communication is not available, (mobile network blackspot) a method of communication that allows a worker to call for help in the event of an emergency at any time must be chosen Mobile phone calls cannot be relied on as an effective method of communication in many locations. Network coverage must be confirmed prior to working alone or remotely
MOVEMENT RECORDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing where a worker is meant to be assists in controlling the risks of working alone or remotely. For example, call-in systems (GAP GUARDIAN) with agreed times and satellite tracking systems can be used to monitor movements of workers that are working alone or remotely
TRAINING, INFORMATION & INSTRUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training must be provided to workers before commencing any working alone or remote activities Workers must be competent in the emergency response procedures in the event of an incident or injury and the use of communication systems. Other training may be identified in the risk assessment



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Approved: 20 November 2020

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3.3 Communication Devices

Field workers that are working alone or remotely must either use GAP Guardian mobile phone application; or a satellite tracking device.

Field workers are defined as those that spend 80% or more of their normal work hours in the field.

Office based workers may use or call in to designated contact every two hours if deemed appropriate in an approved risk assessment.

A risk assessment will determine which communication method is used.

Where work mobiles are not issued, arrangements are to be made and agreed between the Manager and the worker.

3.4 Emergency Preparedness

Before any working alone or remotely work can commence, an Emergency Response Plan must be prepared in consultation with the supervisor and the remote/isolated worker.

The Emergency Response Plan must include actions to take if the worker that is working alone or remotely has failed to make scheduled regular communication as agreed, or has not returned at the nominated time.

The worker that is working alone or remotely must be competent and aware of any emergency response procedures in the event of an incident or injury.

Managers/Supervisors must ensure emergency response contact numbers are communicated to the worker that is working alone or remotely, and worker that is working alone or remotely must carry specified contact details with them.

Managers are to ensure emergency contact and next of kin details are up to date within Emergency Response Plan and People and Culture systems annually.

If contact with the worker that is working alone or remotely cannot be established, or an emergency situation has occurred, the relevant Emergency Response Plan must be commenced immediately.

The Emergency Response Plan is to be reviewed:

- annually;
- before a new working alone or remotely activity occurs; and
- after a working alone or remotely incident occurs.



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3.5 Working in the Office

Notifications are to occur at some stage during the working day when no one else is in the office.

Outlook calendars are to be up to date and shared with team members or manager or the use of a communications board displayed at desk.

3.6 Working from Home

Notifications are to occur at some stage during the working day when working from home.

3.7 Training, Competency and Supervision

Before commencing any working alone or remote tasks, workers must be competent in performing the tasks under the conditions they will be exposed to.

GMW will provide instruction to workers on:

- Hazards associated with working alone or remotely;
- The safe use of remote or isolated work PPE and
- Emergency procedures related working alone or remotely.

3.8 Privacy

GMW will respect and maintain confidentiality and privacy in accordance with any legislative requirements:

- Tracking information will not be held for any longer than it needs to be for the purpose of emergency situations or safety investigation following an incident or event.
- The tracking information cannot be misused or used for any other purpose other than for its intended use, which is to ensure the health, safety or wellbeing of GMW staff.
- Tracking information will not be used to form any part of a performance development or performance management plan or issue.
- Non-conformance with any part of section 3.8 (*this privacy statement*) will be subject to an investigation by People and Culture and may result in disciplinary action.



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Approved: 20 November 2020

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4. Responsibilities

4.1 GMW Executive

GMW Executive and Senior Leadership Team members are responsible for overseeing and ensuring the implementation of the requirements of this procedure within their respective functional areas. This includes ensuring all sites are suitably risk assessed and have appropriate facilities, services and resources to ensure that risks associated with working alone or remotely are adequately managed to minimise the risk of injury or harm to workers.

4.2 Managers

Managers in all operational areas and GMW worksites are responsible for ensuring the review and management of risks associated with working alone or remotely. This includes:

- Providing adequate resources identified in the risk assessment to enable the effective implementation of systems to control and manage risks associated with working alone or remotely;
- Maintaining all records, including risk assessments and any documents related to working alone or remotely;
- Ensuring all proposed working alone or remote activities have been adequately risk assessed and that appropriate controls have been implemented before providing authorisation for the activity to commence;
- Ensuring emergency response contact numbers are communicated to all workers that are working alone or remotely;
- Ensure emergency contact and next of kin details are up to date within emergency response plan and People and Culture systems annually.
- Communicating with Supervisors/Team Leaders to ensure training on and implementation of, working alone or remote work systems;
- Ensuring compliance with this working alone or remote control system for all employees, contractors, projects, sites and facilities under GMW control; and
- Ensuring an approved communication system has been established that is reliable and effective.

4.2.1 Supervisors/Team Leaders

Supervisors and Team Leaders in all operational areas and GMW worksites are responsible for ensuring that risks associated with working alone or remotely are managed, including:

- Ensuring compliance with working alone or remote control systems for all employees, contractors, projects, sites and facilities under their control;



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- Maintaining arrangements, guidelines and control measures for personnel working alone or remotely;
- Undertaking risk assessments of all working alone or remote work and implementing adequate control measures to reduce the risk of these activities prior to approval;
- Providing instruction about risks associated with working alone or remotely at site inductions (when appropriate);
- Ensuring an approved communication system has been established that is reliable and effective; and
- Ensuring emergency response contact numbers are communicated to working alone or remote workers.

4.4 Workers

All workers must ensure that they:

- Follow the requirements detailed in this procedure and associated documents;
- Comply with all work control systems while undertaking any working alone or remote work;
- Communicate with relevant supervisors/Team Leaders before undertaking any working alone or remote work, and seek approval as outlined in this procedure and associated documents;
- Carry emergency contact details when completing any working alone or remote work;
- When required, and in the manner instructed, wear the appropriate PPE supplied;
- Report any incidents/injuries immediately to their supervisor; and complete a GMW OHS Incident Report (in IRIS) in accordance with GMW OHS incident reporting procedures;
- Set an alarm to ensure they are aware that the agreed time for contact has been reached

4.5 Designated Contact

All designated contacts must ensure that they:

- Are available and contactable by the agreed communication method at all times during the completion of agreed activities;
- Are competent in and aware of any emergency response plans in the event of an incident or injury;
- Report any deviations from the original agreed and approved process;
- Report any failures to check in immediately; and
- Activate emergency response procedures immediately if required.



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4.6 Contractors

Prior to engaging contractors to conduct any work on GMW assets the person engaging the contractors must ensure they have a working alone or remotely procedure or policy in place and have provided a risk assessment detailing how they intend to manage the risks of working alone or remotely.

Authorisation to commence remote work shall not be given until the person engaging the contractor/s is satisfied all risks identified have been mitigated.

All working alone or remote work-related incidents must be reported to GMW and entered into IRIS.

5. Definitions

Buddy System: Cooperative arrangements whereby individuals are paired or teamed up and assume responsibility for one another's welfare or safety.

Designated Contact: An individual who has been appointed or selected to be a primary point of contact and who is responsible to initiate or receive communication from the worker that is working alone or remotely.

GMW: Goulburn-Murray Water.

Manager: Employee who has direct responsibility for the activity being performed or the area the activity is occurring in.

Personal Protective Equipment: anything used or worn by a person to minimise risk to the person's health and safety, including air supplied respiratory equipment.

PPE: acronym used for Personal Protective Equipment.

SMS: acronym used for GMW's Safety Management System.

Supervisor: GMW employee who acts or is appointed as a Supervisor, Coordinator or Team Leader within GMW.

Worker: Employees, contractors, subcontractors, outworkers, apprentices and trainees, work experience students, volunteers and persons conducting business or undertakings who are individuals if they perform work for the business.



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Approved: 20 November 2020

Review due: November 2023

6. Document history

Doc #	Date approved	Approved by	Approval #
A3795409	20/11/2020	Glenda Smith	A3852691

7. Associated documents

Document name	Objective Ref.
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 – Vic.	
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 – Vic.	
Compliance Code - Workplace amenities and work environment – Vic.	
Working Alone Emergency Response Plan template	A3826124
Working Alone Critical Safety Checklist	A3826123
Risk Assessment Template	A411001
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy	A627888
Working from Home Procedure	A3056361
Lone Worker Monitoring – Response Management Process	A2928534
GAP Guardian Lone Worker App User Guide	A3334980
GAP Guardian Lone Worker Monitoring User Guide	A3335338
How GAP Guardian Lone Worker Works at GMW	A3481785
GAP Guardian Lone Worker App Frequently Asked Questions	A3501805
Recommended settings for GAP Guardian and GAP Lone Worker App.	A3481786
Factsheet for Working Alone and Apart	A3811350



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8. Appendices

Appendix A - Procedural Overview / Toolbox

This Appendix is designed to provide an overview of the requirements of this procedure – it is to be used as an aid/refresher to the procedure, and is not to be used in isolation without prior training of the procedure. Section 4 – Responsibilities has not been included within this Appendix (Please see Procedure for respective details)

- Workers are considered working alone or remotely when they are:
 - Working in the field, or
 - Working alone at home or in an office.

- Working alone or remotely increases the risk of any job.

Sect.	Requirement
3.1 Fatal Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All workers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that someone in GMW knows where they are, what their travel plans are and when to initiate an emergency response - Assess potential hazards and associated risks when entering remote areas or when working alone - Not conduct any work alone or in a remote area without authorization from manager or supervisor - Establish a daily communication plan with their supervisor or designated contact before conducting work alone or remotely - Ensure communications are established when working alone or entering a remote area - Ensure sufficient planning is completed to ensure correct PPE for working alone or remotely is available • To manage the risks associated with working alone or remotely activities at GMW worksites, GMW will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct and document risk assessments to identify all reasonably foreseeable hazards in relation to working alone or remotely - Ensure where GMW cannot eliminate risk, effective and appropriate control measures are implemented, maintained, monitored and reviewed in line with the hierarchy of controls - Plan and organise work to manage the risks of working alone or remotely including alternatives for where working alone or remotely is not permitted - Ensure before any work commences, appropriate permission and approval processes are applied to validate the risks and controls related to working alone or remotely - Ensure persons authorising or supervising work are competent and trained in relevant work procedures - Develop and implement training frameworks to ensure all workers impacted are provided with appropriate information, instruction and training on risks and controls for working alone and remotely. This includes First Aid training for those who routinely work alone as part of their roster - Establish and test specific Emergency Response Plans and plans for all working alone situations and communication equipment - Introduce, monitor and maintain technology such as individual working alone monitoring devices to augment Emergency Response Plans where applicable - Supply and maintain suitable plant and equipment for workers to reduce the likelihood of working alone or remotely work-related incidents. This includes a requirement for every GMW vehicle to carry a First Aid Kit



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Sect.	Requirement
3.2 Risk Asses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk assessment must be completed before any working alone or remote work can commence to ensure that all potential risks are identified and adequately controlled • The Risk Assessment can be completed on the corporate Risk Assessment template (A411001) • The Risk Assessment is to be reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annually - Before a new working alone or remotely activity occurs - After a working alone or remotely incident occurs
3.3 Comms. Devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field workers that are working alone or remotely must either use GAP Guardian mobile phone application; or a satellite tracking device <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field workers are defined as those that spend 80% or more of their normal work hours in the field • Office based workers may use or call in to designated contact every two hours if deemed appropriate in an approved risk assessment • A risk assessment will determine which communication method is used
3.4 Emerg. Prep.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before any working alone or remotely work can commence, an Emergency Response Plan must be prepared in consultation with the supervisor and the remote/isolated worker • The Emergency Response Plan must include actions to take if the worker that is working alone or remotely has failed to make scheduled regular communication as agreed, or has not returned at the nominated time • The worker that is working alone or remotely must be competent and aware of any emergency response procedures in the event of an incident or injury • Managers/Supervisors must ensure emergency response contact numbers are communicated to the worker that is working alone or remotely, and worker that is working alone or remotely must carry specified contact details with them. • Managers are to ensure emergency contact and next of kin details are up to date within Emergency Response Plan and People and Culture systems annually • If contact with the worker that is working alone or remotely cannot be established, or an emergency situation has occurred, the relevant Emergency Response Plan must be commenced immediately • The Emergency Response Plan is to be reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annually - Before a new working alone or remotely activity occurs - After a working alone or remotely incident occurs
3.5-3.6 Work in Office & Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifications are to occur at some stage during the working day when no one else is in the office • Outlook calendars are to be up to date and shared with team members or manager or the use of a communications board displayed at desk • Notifications are to occur at some stage during the working day when working from home
3.7 Training Comp. & Superv.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before commencing any working alone or remote tasks, workers must be competent in performing the tasks under the conditions they will be exposed to • GMW will provide instruction to workers on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hazards associated with working alone or remotely - The safe use of remote or isolated work PPE - Emergency procedures related working alone or remotely

