



**COMMUNITY NURSING REGISTRY OF OTTAWA
HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

SECTION D: CONTROL ACTIVITIES		D.10 WORKING ALONE
Date Issued: October 2, 2005	Date Revised: 10/22/2008	
Date Revised: 11/01/2010	Date Revised: 11/2012	Date Revised: 05/2014
Date Revised: 05/2015	Date revised: 08/2016	Date reviewed: 07/2017
Date Revised: 05/2018		

D.10 Working Alone

STANDARD

As part of the normal daily work at the CNRO, members accept work that requires them to work alone or effectively unsupervised in the private homes of clients or other healthcare related facilities. Likewise, there are times when employees are working in the office alone. As these work environments are familiar it is important the employees and members stay vigilant and be aware of the risks associated with working alone.

CNRO believes that education to create awareness and promote safety surveillance will support employee and member safety while working alone in the office or community.

This policy applies when the following conditions exist;

- The member is working in a client's private home where there are no other members present or;
- Where the member is not directly supervised by the agency contracting work through the CNRO.
- An employee is working alone in the office environment.

DEFINITIONS

Working Alone - means the performance of any work function by an employee or member who:

- Is the only person working in a specific work location and;
- Is not directly supervised at any time in the performance of the assignment.

Hazard Assessment - is the analysis of the risks and hazards, and the establishment of a corrective action plan to effectively manage safety risks in the work environment.

Effective Means of Communications - means telephone, cell phone or other electronic communication device.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible to;

- Investigate all reported hazards that arise from working alone, identifying root cause and developing action plans to remove or reduce the risk to members or employees.
- Ensure an annual review of the risks associated with working alone are evaluated during the annual Role Hazard Identification Assessment process as per CNRO policy C.4.
- Ensure training for members and employees is completed as per CNRO policy A.5.
- Ensure policies and procedures intended to reduce the risk of working alone are reviewed annually and just-in-time in the event of a near miss, incident or reported hazard.
- Develop and evaluate methods of communication for employees and members who may require assistance when working alone.
- Work with the employee or member to develop a safety plan in the event one is needed.



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- In collaboration with the RN coordinators, facilitate or support the member by working with clients/families to reduce the impact of hazards identified through Client Intake process and the Hazard Identification process (CNRO policy C.3)

The RN Coordinator will:

- Obtain as much information as possible about the client home, the work environment and the working conditions as possible during the Client Intake process.
- Identify any risks associated with working alone, and work with the client to resolve or reduce the risk and provide the information to the members prior to initiating the work assignment.
- Follow-up with the member following their first visit to determine if the situation in the home is as presented on intake and modify safety plans and mitigation strategies as necessary.
- Document as per the procedure below
- Follow up with members to evaluate any plans or interventions developed and report to the Executive Director.

Members will:

- Participate in training as per CNRO policy A.5
- Report hazards as per CNRO policy C.3.
- Provide updates as requested on the working conditions when working alone.
- Participate in the development of plans to mitigate risk issues.
- Notify the coordinator of any safety concerns.
- Contact the on-call coordinator if there are any concerns regarding entrance into the client home, location of the client home before entering the home.
- Maintain regular communication with the office/Nursing Coordinators.
- Follow safe work practices outlined in the procedure section of the policy.
- Check-in with the RN Coordinator at the beginning and end of their first shift with a new client using email to confirm they are safe.

Employees will:

- Participate in training as per CNRO policy A.5
- Report hazards as per CNRO policy C.3.
- Know and understand their role in maintaining member safety

PROCEDURE

Intake and Initial Planning

- Assess for the following during the client intake procedure
 - Remote location
 - Parking access
 - Entrance access
 - Stairs (internal/external)
 - Lighting (internal/external)
 - Pets
 - Patient assistive devices and equipment
- Provide the client information regarding any remediation required.



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- Document the plan in the client chart.
- Document the communication of the plan in the member(s) files.

General Safety Practices for members.

- Make sure your cell phone is charged and operational
- Carry a flashlight
- Remain the car if the access to the home is slippery, snow covered or icy.
- Be mindful that conditions between when you arrive and when you leave will be different. Try to park in a lighted area as close to the home as possible.
- If there is nowhere to park or you don't feel safe parking, call the RN Coordinators who will call the client and arrange for escort or safe parking.
- Notify the RN coordinators of any potentially unsafe circumstances that arise from client preference
 - They prefer to keep the house dark at night while the member is working
 - Narrow stairs, poor handrails
 - Trip hazards
 - Additional household members that make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
 - Pets that CNRO wasn't told about on intake.
- Call 911 if you feel immediately unsafe and report to the coordinators as soon as you are safe and able to do so.

General Safety Practices for employees.

- Lock the main office when they are working alone in the office.
- Take a cell phone with you if you leave the office to use the washroom
- Lock the office if you leave for any reason.
- Make sure someone knows that you are in the office when working outside of normal office hours. Check in on arrival and when leaving.
- Call 911 if you feel immediately unsafe.

OUTCOME

The CNRO and members will work collaboratively to reduce the risks of working alone.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

CNRO policy A.5 Health and Safety Training Program

CNRO policy C. 3 Hazard Reporting

CNRO policy C.4 Role Hazard Identification and Assessment