

## AP 427 – Assigned to Work in Isolation

### Purpose

A worker is considered to be working alone or in isolation when they **are assigned to work alone or in isolation**, do not have assistance that is readily available in case of emergency, injury or ill health. In order to determine whether or not assistance is readily available, the following conditions should be considered:

- Presence of others: Are other people in the vicinity?
- Awareness: Will other persons capable of providing assistance be aware of the worker's need?
- Willingness: Is it reasonable to expect those other persons will provide assistance?
- Timeliness: Will assistance be provided within a reasonable period of time?
- Customers or clients are not generally considered to meet the definition of assistance that is readily available.

**Definitions:** WorkSafeBC Guidelines for Working Alone Regulations state: *"Workers who work alone or in isolation for short or intermittent periods of time without being directed to do so are not considered to have been "assigned" to work alone. For example, a worker in most office and similar work settings, where other workers are normally present during their work hours, is not considered to be assigned to work alone or in isolation if, for example, the worker decides to come in early, work late, or come in on a day off. While a worker in such a setting may choose to work alone and this is permitted by the employer, the worker is not considered to have been assigned to work alone."*

### Procedure

#### A. General Guidelines:

1. It is recognized that some employees may be assigned to work alone or in isolation.
2. As needed, staff will receive Non-Violent Crisis Intervention training (NVCI) as soon as is reasonably practicable after placement in their assignment. NVCI training will be renewed every two years or as deemed appropriate by the immediate supervisor, whichever comes first.
3. All incidents of violence in the workplace must be formally reported in accordance with the Written Safe Work Procedures for [Reporting Threat / Violence in the Workplace](#).
4. All incidents of violence must undergo a Risk Assessment in accordance with Written Safe Work Procedures for [Employee Safety Plans – Violent Incidents](#).

#### B. Meetings with individuals other than School District Employees

1. Use rooms with windows which open to the main area.
2. If there are no windows, leave the door open.
3. Sit nearest the exit.
4. Ensure colleagues are aware that a meeting is taking place.

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5. Where appropriate, have a second colleague present in the meeting.
6. If no one available to assist in an emergency, call 911.

### C. Caretaker Buddy Contact Procedure

1. Caretakers whose assigned shift requires that they work alone must check in with a buddy school, at the prescribed time, in accordance with the attached schedule.
2. Failure to contact the buddy school will result in an emergency call to the supervisor to attend the site to ensure the caretaker's well-being.
3. Caretakers who leave the assigned work site early must notify their buddy school, in addition to normal process for gaining supervisor approval.
4. Where sites have two or more Caretakers working together, shifts must end at the same time unless otherwise approved.
5. Where there are two or more caretakers working together, they will communicate with each other at mutually agreed upon times to ensure each other's wellbeing (for example: coffee breaks, lunch break and end of shift).
6. Where there are two or more caretakers working together, they will secure the building at the end of the shift collectively. One must not leave before ensuring the other(s) is safely in their vehicle.

### D. Caretaker Buddy Contact System

School A is to contact School B at 8 p.m. and again at 10:50 p.m. following the security check.

School A will contact the afternoon supervisor at 10:50 p.m. to advise both School A and School B have conducted their security checks, are alarming the building and leaving for the night (leave a voicemail message if the line is busy). The afternoon supervisor will contact the answering service to confirm that buildings have been alarmed by 11:10 p.m.

| School A          | School B        | Phone #  | Confirmed w/supervisor at end of shift 741-5213 |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------|---|
| Seaview           | Pleasant Valley | 390 4027 |   |
| McGirr            | Randerson Ridge | 758 5076 |   |
| Departure Bay     | Ciliare         | 758 7941 |   |
| Uplands Park      | Rock City       | 758 2434 |   |
| Forest Park       | Quarterway      | 754 6845 |   |
| Brechin           | Pauline Haarer  | 754 2722 |   |
| Mountain View     | Fairview        | 753 3418 |   |
| Chase River       | Cinnabar Valley | 716 1030 |   |
| Woodbank          | North Cedar     | 722 2722 |   |
| North Oyster      | Ladysmith Int.  | 245 3351 |   |
| Ladysmith Primary | Ladysmith Sec.  | 245 3043 |   |

| The following sites will call the afternoon Supervisor directly at the times as listed at 616-6485 or 616-6487. |               |                          |  |
|---|---------------|--------------------------|--|
| School  | First Call In | Second Call In           |  |
| Bayview   | 8 p.m.        | 10:45 p.m.               |  |
| Coal Tyee   | 8 p.m.        | 11 p.m.                  |  |
| DAC   | 8 p.m.        | 11 p.m.                  |  |
| Frank J. Ney  | 8 p.m.        | (will be at Hammond Bay) |  |
| Hammond Bay   | 8 p.m.        | 11 p.m.                  |  |
| Park Avenue   | 8 p.m.        | 11 p.m.                  |  |

### E. Home Visits

Teachers / LSST Staff / Child, Youth & Family Support Workers

*“High Risk”* Homes known for domestic disputes  
Homes where employees, by way of visitations, believe their safety is at risk.  
Homes where employees have been requested not to visit by family members.  
Homes known to contain illegal drugs

*“Medium Risk”* May cause the employee to be concerned because the home is new or unfamiliar to the employee.  
Homes located in a remote or isolated area.  
Homes where the emotional state of any of the occupants is unpredictable

*“Low Risk”* The worker knows the family well and believes there is low risk in approaching the home.

1. Consideration must be given to whether it would be more appropriate to invite the family into the work site, thereby avoiding a home visit.
2. Should it be necessary for an employee to conduct a home visit a Risk Assessment in accordance with the following must be carried out (see Appendix 1 *Risk Assessment Checklist – Home Visits Form*)
  - a. Review student / family history for the purposes of determining issues that may arise at the home that may place the employee at risk. This review could include information from the administrator, teachers, education assistants, school-based team, IEP, violent incident reports and the employee safety plan. It should also include such issues as is there a dog in residence, access concerns, remoteness, lighting, etc.
  - b. Based upon the review, determine if this home falls into the “High – Medium – Low Risk” category (see above definitions).
  - c. Should there not be sufficient information to determine risk, then alternate arrangements must be made as follows:
    - i. The home visit conducted by two employees.
    - ii. The home visit cancelled.
    - iii. The home visit carried out in a safe community-based environment (ie Tim Hortons).

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- iv. The home visit rescheduled to be conducted at the school during school operating hours.
    - d. Home visits, where the home has been categorized as “High Risk”, **will not be** conducted.
    - e. Home visits, where the home has been categorized as “Medium Risk”, will be conducted **by two employees or one employee in a public meeting place (ie Tim Hortons)**
3. Learning Support Services Team (LSST) staff will use the Buddy Contact Procedure when assigned to work alone.
  - a. Staff must advise their supervisor who their Buddy Contact Person is.
  - b. The supervisor must maintain a record of the Buddy Contact System in accordance with Appendix 3.
  - c. The supervisor will review this procedure annually with staff.
4. In preparation to conduct a home visit, the attached *Check-in Record (Appendix 2)* must be completed and provided to the Buddy Contact Person or school office staff as follows:
  - a. The Buddy (or designate) must be advised that you are conducting a home visit and a record made indicating the time you are leaving to conduct the visit, the name, address and phone number of the home and the time you expect the home visit to conclude, as well as providing your call back number.
  - b. Upon arrival at the home, but prior to entry, a call must be made to the Buddy (or designate) advising that you are entering the site. The Buddy (or designate) must keep a record of this call.
  - c. Upon leaving the home, and in your vehicle, a call must be made to the Buddy (or designate) advising that you are in your vehicle and leaving the site. The Buddy staff (or designate) must keep a record of this call.
  - d. If the visit goes beyond the time expected, a call must be made to the Buddy (or designate) advising of the new time expected for the visit to conclude. The Buddy (or designate) must keep a record of this call.
  - e. Should the Buddy (or designate) not receive a call, as outlined above, within ½ hour of the agreed upon times the Buddy (or designate) should call the employees call back number. The Buddy (or designate) must keep a record of this call.
  - f. Failure of the employee to answer the call will result in an immediate call to the Principal or Immediate Supervisor, who if not able to ascertain the location or status of the employee, will contact 911 to respond to the home residence last visited by the employee. The office staff (or designate) must keep a record of this call.
5. Prior to entering the home, the following process must be followed:
  - a. Stop near the home and observe the surroundings looking for:
    - i. Available access and egress.
    - ii. Line of site to the roadway (doorway or driveway blocked by trees, shrubs or obstacles).
    - iii. Is there a doghouse in the yard.
  - b. If possible, back your vehicle into the yard.
  - c. Call the Buddy (or designate) that you are leaving your vehicle to enter the home.

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- d. Listen for voices or noises that may lead you to be concerned for your safety. If you smell an illegal substance do not enter.
- e. Should the home have a dog that causes you concern do not leave your vehicle – sound the horn.
- f. As much as possible, meet in the room closest to the entry door. Keep your shoes on. Maintain a “reactionary gap” between yourself and the client – out of reach of the average person’s kicking distance. Increase the gap by sitting at a table. Be aware of the client’s proximity at all times.
- g. Upon leaving, call the Buddy (or designate) that you are leaving the site.

### F. Assigned to Work Week Nights, Weekends & Holidays

**Definitions:** WorkSafeBC Guidelines for Working Alone Regulations state: *“Workers who work alone or in isolation for short or intermittent periods of time without being directed to do so are not considered to have been “assigned” to work alone. For example, a worker in most office and similar work settings, where other workers are normally present during their work hours, is not considered to be assigned to work alone or in isolation if, for example, the worker decides to come in early, work late, or come in on a day off. While a worker in such a setting may choose to work alone and this is permitted by the employer, the worker is not considered to have been assigned to work alone.”*

Should an employee **be assigned to work alone or in isolation (see above definition)**, (ie evening and/or on weekends), the employer must:

- a. Identify any hazards to that worker.
- b. Take measures to:
  - i. Eliminate the hazard; and
  - ii. If it is not practicable to eliminate the hazard, to minimize the risk from the hazard.

### G. Hazard Control Procedures

Weekdays – Custodian is on Site – Building Unarmed

- a. If possible, the employee should park their vehicle near the entrance/exit door they plan to use.
- b. Enter building then immediately check door to ensure it is locked behind you.
- c. Sign the IN/OUT Record Sheet on the clipboard located by the Security Keypad station. Provide name, date, time in, estimated time out and phone number for which you can be contacted. This record will be available to the custodian.
- d. Check your cell phone for signal in the area that you will be working – work in area that has good signal.
- e. If the employee is meeting with parents or other outside agencies, if at all possible arrange with the custodian to work near the area for the time that the meeting occurs.
- f. Upon leaving the building check the IN/OUT Record and confirm if the building is empty or if other staff remain on site.
- g. Sign the IN/OUT Record – ensure the door is locked behind you when you leave. If you are the last to leave the building secure the building by arming the security system.

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- h. At the end of their shift, the custodian will check the IN/OUT Record to determine if the school is empty. If staff still in the school, the custodian will notify the employee that they are leaving and that the staff is responsible for securing the building and the process for carrying out same.

### H. Weekends / Holidays When Custodian Not on Site – Building is Armed

- a. Enter the building then immediately check the door to ensure it is locked behind you.
- b. Disarm the security system.
- c. Sign the IN/OUT Record Sheet on the clipboard located by the Security Keypad station. Provide name, date, time in, estimated time out and phone number for which you can be contacted. This record will be available to other staff that may enter the building.
- d. Check your cell phone for signal in the area that you will be working – work in area that has good signal.
- e. Implement the Safety Plan Check-In Procedure developed in consultation with the supervisor who assigned you to work alone.
- f. Upon leaving the building check the IN/OUT Record and confirm if the building is empty or other staff remain on site.
- g. Sign the IN/OUT Record – ensure the door is locked behind you when you leave. If you are the last to leave the building secure the building by arming the security system.

### I. Personal Safety Precautions

Think ahead about how you would react if assaulted  
 Ensure a clear exit route from your work area  
 Move your vehicle to a lighted parking lot before dark  
 Keep keys in your hands; don't fumble in your purse  
 Keep valuables out of sight; do not leave unattended  
 Never walk alone after dark, in poorly lit areas, etc.  
 Do not wear headphones when working alone  
 Do not get on elevator with anyone if you feel uneasy  
 Do not allow yourself to be backed into a corner  
 Look directly at people to assess them (do not stare)  
 If there are signs of attempted entry, do not enter (call 911)  
 Avoid vehicle if someone is loitering nearby (get help)  
 Check your vehicle before getting in  
 If walking alone to vehicle, wave to co-worker (fake it)  
 Keep aware of aggressive drivers (avoid eye contact)  
 If you feel threatened, go to "safe room" and call for help

Walk confidently; do not show hesitation or fear  
 Know your route and stay in well-lighted areas  
 Keep vehicle doors and windows locked  
 Do not stop to assist stranded drivers  
 Stay cool when driving (do not react to provocation)  
 Be aware of your surroundings (do not act lost)  
 Know your "safe room" in case of emergencies  
 Stand near control panel when in elevator alone  
 Do not open back or secondary doors when alone  
 Know where to access telephone  
 If you enter a washroom and feel unsafe, back out  
 Check your vehicle from a distance (including underneath)  
 Do not accept assistance if your vehicle is stalled  
 To assist stranded drivers, drive on and call police  
 Trust your feelings, if you feel in danger, you probably are

### Non Verbal Communication

| <u>Example</u>        | <u>Eyes</u> | <u>Lips</u> | <u>Hands</u> | <u>Body</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Friendly/Enthusiastic | Alert       | Open        | Extended     | Forward     |

Adopted: February 2017  
 Reference: WorkSafe BC Policies and Regulations

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|              |                 |                                |                      |  |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Boredom      | Drooping        | Slack                          | Drumming             | Slumped  |
| Astonishment | Wide open       | Open                           | Extended             | Tense  |
| Nervousness  | Darting         | Twitching                      | Drumming, sweating   | Tense  |
| Defensive    | Glancing        | Pursed                         | Fist clenched        | Arms & legs crossed                            |
| Suspicious   | Darting         | Closed, pursed                 | To the mouth         | Holding back                                   |
| Evaluating   | Increased focus | Closed                         | Stroking             | On edge  |
| Frustrated   | Staring         | Closed / tight                 | Palm to back of head | Slumping                                       |
| Superiority  | Look down       | Pursed, sneering               | Behind head          | Forward, scowling, abusive language            |
| Anger        | Increased focus | Tight, clenched jaw, red-faced | Fists, sweating      | Rigid, packing, restless, trembling or shaking |

### Risk Assessment Checklist Home Visits Form

Completion Date \_\_\_\_\_ Completed by \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Family Name \_\_\_\_\_

| Question  | Notes |
|---|-------|
| What is the address and the safest route to get to the home?  |       |
| Where is the closest and safest parking?  |       |
| What is the safest route into the residence and which entrance should be used?  |       |
| Are there any physical hazards (barriers, broken steps, free-roaming dogs, weapons)?                                  |       |
| Will other people be in the residence during the visit? If so, how many and what is their relationship to the family? |       |
| Is the family aware of the approximate time of your arrival?  |       |
| Have you been trained in NVC?   |       |
| Have you been trained in the safety program for conducting home visits?   |       |

*“High Risk”:* Homes known for domestic disputes  
Homes where employees, by way of visitations, believe their safety is at risk.  
Homes where employees have been requested not to visit by family members.  
Homes known to contain illegal drugs

*“Medium Risk”* May cause the employee to be concerned because the home is new or unfamiliar to the employee.  
Homes located in a remote or isolated area.  
Homes where the emotional state of any of the occupants is unpredictable

*“Low Risk”* The worker knows the family well and believes there is low risk in approaching the home.

Assessment Outcome: **High Medium Low**

| Question   | Yes / No | High / Medium / Low Risk |
|--|----------|--------------------------|
| Is this home and family known to you?  |          |                          |
| Is the home located in a remote or isolated area?  |          |                          |
| Do you know if any of the occupants’ emotional state is unpredictable.                     |          |                          |
| Is there a history of any violent or aggressive behaviour?                                 |          |                          |
| Is there a history of domestic disputes?   |          |                          |
| Has this home requested school district employees not to visit?                            |          |                          |
| Is this home known to contain illegal substances?  |          |                          |
| Notwithstanding the above, do you believe your safety to be at risk in visiting this home? |          |                          |
| Other concerns:  |          |                          |

Any Assessment Outcome recorded as “High” – automatically categorizes the home as “High Risk” (see 2d)

Any Assessment Outcome recorded as “Medium” – automatically categorizes the home as “Medium Risk” (see 2e)



## Check In Record

### Home Visits – Working Alone or in Isolation

*To be completed prior to conducting a home visit –  
provide to Buddy for check-in, check-out and follow-up in case of emergency.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Employee \_\_\_\_\_

Name, Address and phone number of home to be visited \_\_\_\_\_

Time of the home visit \_\_\_\_\_

Time the home visit will conclude \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Call Back Number \_\_\_\_\_

Office staff (or designate) name to whom call in checks will be made \_\_\_\_\_

| Check-in time  | Confirmation of check-in / Notes |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Before entering home                                     |                                  |
| Upon Leaving home  |                                  |
| No contact made – Call employee on call back number      |                                  |
| No contact made – Call Principal or immediate supervisor |                                  |
| No contact made – call 911                               |                                  |

#### Procedure

- Call the office prior to entering the home.
- Upon leaving the home, call the office advising you are in your vehicle and leaving the site.
- If visit goes beyond the expected time allotted, a call must be made to the Buddy Contact advising of the new time expected for the visit to conclude.
- Should Buddy Contact not receive a call as outlined above, within ½ hour of the agreed upon time, they should call the employee's number.
- Failure of the employee to answer the call will result in an immediate call to the principal or immediate supervisor, who if not able to ascertain the location or status of the employee, will call 911 to respond to the home residence last visited by the employee.

**Keep record for a minimum of 2 years.**

