Remote & Isolated Work Procedure

1. Overview
The Wudinna District Council as part of its commitment under its Hazardous Work Policy recognises its obligation to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and wellbeing of employees who undertake remote or isolated work.

In accordance with this commitment the Council will provide and maintain an adequate and reliable system for regular communication for people who work alone in the following situations:

- In an area that is remote from others or isolated from the assistance of others because of time, location or the nature of the work, or
- In a situation that involves the operation or maintenance of plant, or the handling of a hazardous substance, or
- In an area/activity that is dangerous for the employee to perform alone.

2. Core components
The core components of our remote and isolated work procedure are:

- An adequate and reliable system for regular communication
- Processes for the identification of hazards associated with isolated work are in place and evidence is available
- The training requirements for workers that undertake isolated work are identified and implemented adequately
- Conduct risk assessments for identified isolated work activities
- Implement appropriate risk controls
- Evidence of evaluation of any rescue/response activities to ensure effectiveness
- Test and evaluate response systems.

3. Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competent Person</td>
<td>A person who is suitably qualified (whether by experience, training or both) to carry out the work or function described in the relevant regulation [as defined by the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations, 1995]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>An individual, company or other legal entity that carries out work or performs services under a contract for service. This includes sub-contractors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>Any event that arises internally or from external sources, which may adversely affect persons or the community generally, and which requires an immediate response [as defined by Australian Standard AS 3745: Emergency control organization and procedures for buildings, structures and workplaces]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hierarchy of Control</td>
<td>The system that is indicated in Regulation1.3.3 of the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations, 1995 that is applied in descending order to control hazards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Off-site</td>
<td>Anywhere other than Council premises where work may be conducted e.g.: Council employees’ homes, any public locations, parks, gardens.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version No:</th>
<th>1.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issued:</td>
<td>20 July 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Review:</td>
<td>20 July 2012</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On-site</th>
<th>Any Council premises</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</td>
<td>PPE is specialized clothing or equipment worn by employees for protection against health and safety hazards. Personal protective equipment is designed to protect many parts of the body, e.g.: eyes, head, face, hands, feet, and ears.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plant</td>
<td>Any machinery, equipment, appliance, implement or tool and any component, fitting, connection, mounting or accessory used in or in conjunction with such. [as defined by the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations, 1995]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote or Isolated Work</td>
<td>For the purpose of this procedure, remote or isolated work occurs if you: • work alone and away from other persons; e.g.:  undertake road maintenance, repair or inspection alone  operate or install, repair or maintain plant alone  work in an office in a separate part of a building away from others  work from home  work when everyone else has left the Council premises and gone home  are called out to work alone at night  start very early in the morning  travel alone to areas where mobile phone coverage is poor/non existent  drive long distances alone for work</td>
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4. Procedure

4.1. Identification of hazards associated with remote or isolated work

4.1.1. Functional Managers shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all new remote or isolated work situations or tasks are identified, in consultation with employees and or their representatives, prior to the commencement of the remote or isolated work.

4.1.2. The Functional Manager, in consultation with employees or their representatives, shall schedule a review of remote or isolated work activities to confirm that all such activities have appropriate controls in place. The review process should be documented and the results recorded on the Hazard Register.

4.1.3. The jobs or tasks with higher frequency and or severity rates indicate priority areas for review.

4.2. Risk assessment

4.2.1. The Functional Manager shall form a team to undertake the risk assessment. The team shall consist of a competent person to lead the risk assessment / JSA process, employees who are involved in the activity to be assessed, a HSR (where one exists for the work group), the manager or supervisor and other stakeholders or experts, where relevant.

4.2.2. The risk assessment / JSA shall consider, but not be limited to, the risks associated with:

a. The time of the activity is to be undertaken e.g.: daytime or after dark

b. The security of the person when undertaking the activity, including whether they are likely to be exposed to instances of aggression and/or violence
c. Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person e.g.: are they working:
   - At height
   - With electricity, hazardous substances and / or plant
   - Near or on the road way
   - In confined spaces
   - In excavations
   (In such situations it would be unlikely that working alone would be appropriate)

d. Environmental factors such as extremes of temperature, fire bans, flood, severe storms, etc and potential for animal (including reptile and insect) attack

e. The method of travel

f. Other potential emergencies associated either with the particular environment or activity

g. Whether the person is medically fit to work in isolation or alone.

4.2.3. The risk assessment / JSA findings shall be documented.
   a. The assessment form must record the agreed estimations for likelihood and consequence and risk rating.

4.3. Risk control

   4.3.1. Controls shall be selected in descending order from the Hierarchy of Control. The risk assessment / JSA must clearly indicate what control measures are to be used. Examples include, but are not limited to:

   | Elimination          | Redesign the work process to ensure that two people undertake the task, whenever reasonably practicable (this may include having a supervisor or observer present). Do not allow Council employees or other relevant stakeholders to work unaccompanied when:
                        |   - Working at height
                        |   - Working with electricity
                        |   - Using hazardous substances
                        |   - Operating any plant capable of inflicting serious injury, such as chainsaws, lathes, power saws or firearms
                        |   - Working in confined spaces or in excavations.
   | Substitution         | Substitute less hazardous materials, equipment or substances.
   | Engineering          | Have all vehicles and plant maintained and serviced on a regular basis. Use guards to prevent access to dangerous parts (Sheaths on Power take off shafts (P.T.O’s) etc) or isolate the operator from the hazard (by the use of pressure switches on mowers etc.
   | Administrative       | Council has a documented contact strategy to ensure contact is made between Council and a person working in an area remote/isolated from the assistance of others and an adequate and reliable system for
ensuring regular communication with the person is provided and maintained.

The contact strategy ensures contact is made between the Functional Manager, Supervisor or delegated person and the person working remotely or in isolation twice a day (10am and 3pm) or more frequent depending on the level of risk involved in the task. An employee working in isolation is to report to the Supervisor before proceeding to the destination and after completing isolated or remote work.

Document and provide a travel itinerary to the manager.

Identify and provide an appropriate communication device e.g.: mobile phone, Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) etc and provide training in their use.

Develop Safe Work Instructions for the task, including emergency procedures and provide training.

Provide first aid training and first aid equipment appropriate to the activities being undertaken and the location of the task. When relevant, include the remote area module.

Avoid assigning staff with a known medical condition to tasks that may put the person or others at risk.

Provide information and training that has been identified through the risk assessment process. For example:

- Managing vehicle breakdowns
- Safe driving, particularly 4WDs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</th>
<th>Provision and use of PPE relevant to the task and in accordance with Council procedures relevant to the task</th>
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4.3.2. The controls identified by the risk assessment / JSA shall be in place before work commences.

4.3.3. Each person involved in the job shall sign their acknowledgement of the risk assessment /JSA prior to work commencing.

4.3.4. The findings of the risk assessment process shall be transferred to the Hazard Register.

4.3.5. A risk assessment / JSA may be used repeatedly for generic tasks, providing that:

a. No changes have been made to the work or working environment

b. The risk assessment is entirely relevant to the activity being undertaken

c. It has been reviewed and signed off by all parties prior to the work commencing.

4.3.6. Any work that is not regularly undertaken or has been changed from a generic task will need a new risk assessment / JSA completed before the activity (re-)commences.

4.4. Emergency management

4.4.1. The management of emergencies on Council premises (e.g.: fire, etc) shall occur in accordance with site emergency procedures.
4.4.2. Emergency procedures developed for remote and or isolated work shall form part of the Council emergency response plan and be subject to testing, monitoring and review as described by that document.

4.4.3. If a person fails to make contact with their Functional Manager, Supervisor or delegate at the nominated time when undertaking remote and or isolated work:
   a. The Functional Manager, Supervisor or delegate shall make an attempt at contact within 15 minutes.
   b. If this attempt fails, the Functional Manager, Supervisor or delegate shall attempt to contact the person by any means (e.g.: at hotel / accommodation where relevant, at off-site workplace, via next of kin / emergency contact; sending staff from nearest depot to search etc).
   c. If no response to these activities, the Supervisor or delegate shall communicate the situation to the Functional Manager. The Functional Manager shall determine further action.
   d. If contact with staff member has not been made within one hour, the Functional Manager shall ensure the emergency services are contacted and briefed. Any instructions issued by emergency services shall be followed.
   e. The Functional Manager shall communicate with the CEO, Corporate Services Manager and LGAWCS once emergency services have been briefed.
   f. The Corporate Services Manager shall manage next-of-kin / emergency contact communication, dependent upon needs of emergency, and offer staff counselling as required.

4.4.4. If the emergency services inform Council that an emergency situation involving an employee has occurred:
   a. The Supervisor or delegate shall communicate the situation to the Functional Manager
   b. The Functional Manager shall decide on further action, as relevant to the situation
   c. The Functional Manager shall communicate with the CEO, Corporate Services Manager, and LGAWCS and provide regular updates on the status and progress of the emergency event
   d. The Corporate Services Manager shall manage next-of-kin / emergency contact communication, dependent upon needs of emergency and offer staff counselling as required.

4.5. Accidents or incidents

4.5.1. Any person involved in an off-site accident or incident shall take whatever steps are necessary to control the hazard (if safe to do so), seek any first aid or emergency assistance (if required) and report the incident to their Functional Manager or Supervisor as soon as reasonably practicable. The Functional Manager shall direct action as required.

4.5.2. The Accident / Incident Investigation and Reporting Procedure shall be complied with.

4.5.3. If the activity is at a work site under the control of a host organisation the accident and incident shall also be reported to the host organisation’s relevant representative.
4.6. Monitoring and evaluation

4.6.1. The Functional Manager, Supervisor or delegate shall inform all relevant persons about the control measures selected or corrective actions that have been implemented for remote and isolated work. Department meeting minutes and/or JSAs (where relevant) shall demonstrate that this has occurred.

4.6.2. The Functional Manager, Supervisor or delegate shall check that any new hazards that may have been introduced by the selected control methods are identified by:
   a. Monitoring and evaluating controls for effectiveness
   b. Recommencing the risk assessment process if new electrical hazards are identified
   c. Communicating the outcomes of the risk assessment process within the department or work group and to the OHS&W Committee, as required
   d. Retaining completed risk assessments / JSAs.

4.6.3. The OHS&W Committee shall monitor the Hazard Register during its meetings. A report shall be presented to management listing outstanding items requiring their direction or enforcement.

4.6.4. The OHS&W Committee shall review hazard and incident statistics, audit results, legislative changes and other information relating to the remote and isolated work and refer any concerns to the relevant Functional Manager for direct action when required. Minutes shall record outcomes of discussion and actions undertaken.

4.6.5. The Remote and Isolated Work Procedure shall be subject to internal audit and the audit findings shall be reported as part of the ongoing management review process.

4.6.6. The OHS&W Committee shall set, monitor and review objectives, targets and performance indicators for the remote and isolated work as relevant.

5. Training

5.1. The Wudinna District Council Training Needs Analysis shall identify the training needs of all Council employees who work in isolation or may be required to undertake work remotely.

5.2. Employees, visitors and contractors shall have the remote and isolated work procedure explained to them during the induction process.

5.3. Persons undertaking risk assessments shall have specific training that includes legislative requirements for remote or isolated work.

5.4. Any person required to undertake remote and or isolated work regularly should be trained in basic first aid.

5.5. Council Employees who are required to undertake remote and or isolated work shall receive training specific to:
   5.5.1. The tasks required to be undertaken
   5.5.2. The contact strategy to be implemented
   5.5.3. First aid and emergency procedures for the respective situation
   5.5.4. Other relevant Council policies and procedures.

5.6. Functional Managers and supervisors shall be trained in the requirements of this procedure.
5.7. Contractors shall be made aware of the remote and isolated work procedure during the contractor tendering process.

6. **Records**

The following records shall be maintained in accordance with the General Disposal Schedule 20 For Local Government Records in South Australia - 4th Edition (GDS 20):

6.1. Risk assessments – review after 5 years or when legislation or activities change

6.2. SWIs - review after 5 years or when legislation or activities change

6.3. Records relating to procedures

6.4. Risk management plans

6.5. Training records

6.6. Records relating to the management of workplace safety including periodic inspections and investigations into minor hazards or complaints raised by staff

6.7. Management of complaints by staff about OHS&W matters affecting them personally. Includes objections to undertaking hazardous duties and/or working in an unsafe or unhealthy environment

6.8. Statutory notifications

7. **Responsibilities**

7.1. The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for:

7.1.1. Facilitating Council meeting its legislative duties for remote and isolated work

7.1.2. Approving any reasonably practicable budgetary expenditure necessary for remote and isolated work as required

7.1.3. Checking Functional Managers and supervisors have been provided with training to ensure they understand and can:

   a. Apply the requirements of the remote and isolated work legislation and this procedure to the areas and activities under their control

   b. Maintain an adequate and reliable system for regular communication with persons working in isolation or remotely.

7.1.4. Enforcing close out of items when required

7.1.5. Including a review of remote and isolated work within the management review process.

7.2. Managers and supervisors are accountable for:

7.2.1. Checking that all reasonably foreseeable hazards associated with remote and isolated work are identified, assessed and controlled when elimination is not practicable and are recorded on the Hazard Register, in consultation with employees or their representatives

7.2.2. Implementing controls, in consultation with employees or their representatives or other stakeholders, using the Hierarchy of Control; and evaluating and reviewing them for effectiveness

7.2.3. Communicating the outcomes of risk assessments within the department or work groups and across the organisation as required
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7.2.4. Checking that employees and other stakeholders undertaking any remote and or isolated work are provided with training to ensure they can undertake their tasks safely, use any equipment provided and can understand and implement any emergency response procedures.

7.2.5. Closing out Hazard Register items within designated time frames.

7.2.6. Retaining records as required.

7.2.7. Seeking expert advice when a need is identified.

7.2.8. Providing required reports to the OHS&W Committee or management.

7.3. Employees are responsible for:

7.3.1. Keeping next of kin or emergency contact details up-to-date with the Corporate Services Manager.

7.3.2. Attending training when required.

7.3.3. Following any instructions given for their own or others’ safety.

7.3.4. Maintaining contact with their Functional Manager, or Supervisor in accordance with the agreed contact strategy when undertaking remote or isolated work.

7.3.5. Reporting hazardous situations or safety problems when undertaking any remote and or isolated work, immediately to their Functional Manager or Supervisor.

7.4. The OHS&W Committee is accountable for:

7.4.1. Facilitating co-operation between management and employees in matters relating to remote and or isolated work.

7.4.2. Monitoring the Hazard Register and referring issues to Functional Managers that require their direction or enforcement.

7.4.3. Setting objectives, targets and performance indicators for remote and isolated work, as relevant.

7.4.4. Reviewing the effectiveness of remote and isolated work processes.

8. Review

8.1. The Remote and Isolated Work Procedure shall be reviewed by the OHS&W Committee, in consultation with management, employees or their representatives, every twenty four (24) months or more frequently if legislation or Council needs change. This may include a review of:

8.1.1. Legislative compliance issues.

8.1.2. Audit findings relating to remote and or isolated work.

8.1.3. Incident and hazard reports related to remote and or isolated work, claims costs and trends.

8.1.4. Feedback from managers, employees, contractors or others.

8.1.5. Other relevant information.

8.2. Results of reviews may result in preventative and/or corrective actions being implemented and revision of this document.
9. References

Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986
Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Regulations 1995
General Disposal Schedule 20 for Local Government
WorkCoverSA Performance Standards for Self-Insurers

NOTE: this is not an exhaustive list and other documents may need to be referenced depending on the nature and hazards of the work being undertaken and the respective work environment.

10. Related documents

Hazardous Work Policy
Hazard Register
Risk Assessment
JSA
Safe Work Instructions
Training Needs Analysis
Accident / Incident Investigation and Reporting Procedure
Emergency Response Plan - Remote and Isolated Emergency Procedure
Administration Procedure Manual

SIGNED: …………………………………  ………………………………………
Responsible Officer  Chairperson, OHS&W Committee

Date: _____/_____/_____  Date: _____/_____/_____