COMMUNITY LIVING VICTORIA

5.22 STAFF WORKING ALONE IN THE COMMUNITY

PURPOSE

To ensure the safety and well-being of all Community Living Victoria (CLV) staff when working alone, it is essential to assess and mitigate possible risks, and to have established check-in systems. This policy outlines the procedures for working alone including a risk assessment and two options for check-in systems: a Text System, and the Safety Line phone-based Application.

DEFINITION

As defined by Work Safe BC, to work alone or in isolation means to work in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker (a) in case of an emergency, or (b) in case the worker was injured or in ill health.

DIRECTIVE

The direct supervisor of a staff member is responsible for maintaining a safe work environment for that staff working alone in community. In most cases this will be a Manager or Supervisor, and in some cases, a Director.

Prior to allowing staff to work alone, the direct supervisor and staff will conduct a risk assessment for the specific tasks or duties involved. This assessment will include identifying potential hazards and implementing control measures to minimize risks.

CLV staff are required to be familiar with, and to follow, one of these two safety procedures when working alone.

1. Text System

2. Safety Line Application

PROCEDURES

The Supervisor, Manager, or Director is responsible for ensuring that each staff who spends any part of their shift alone follows the procedure for checking in at regular intervals. For a standard shift or shorter time period, increments of 4 hours or less will be determined by the Supervisor or Manager and communicated to the staff. The Safety Line Application is set to require check-ins from staff every 4 hours.

All staff who work alone will retain contact information for their Supervisor or Manager, as well as their Director, CLV's On-Call number, and local emergency numbers including police and fire stations. All staff will respond to emergencies as outlined in the Emergency Procedures Manual.

Procedure 1: Text System

* The Supervisor or Manager will record the details of each check-in with the staff over the course of this procedure.

Staff who start their day in community will send their direct Supervisor or Manager a text at the start of the shift indicating their schedule, including the initials of individuals they plan to see, activities and/or community location they plan to access, and a timeline for each.

Midway through their shift, staff will send a second text confirming all is ok and they will include their current location.

At the end of their shift, staff will send a third text confirming that they have completed their assignment and are finished for the day.

In the event that the Supervisor/Manager does not receive a safety confirmation from the staff at the intervals above, they will try to contact the staff by text or phone call. If they are not able to connect, they will contact the last supported individual they were with to determine their status and the time they left the individual. If they are still unable to reach the staff, the Supervisor/Manager will notify their Program Director for further follow-up and collectively decide on the possible need to attempt to reach the staff's emergency contact and engage with emergency services.

In the event that it is the Supervisor/Manager who is working their entire shift alone in community, they will follow the same procedure above, but will communicate with their Director who will follow the same response procedures as listed above.

Procedure 2: Using Safety Line Application

Staff who use the Safety Line App will install and set the app up according to the provided guidelines.

Staff will check-in to the app upon the start of their shift and will record their morning plan via voice or text on the app.

The Safety Line App will prompt staff for regular check-ins at intervals of 4 hours. Staff will respond to these prompts with another recording their status and location.

If a check-in is missed, the Safety Line App will initiate an alert to the Program Director and the Director will track, attempt to locate, and contact the staff person.

If the Director is unable to reach the staff, they will confer with other Directors and proceed with other attempts to make contact, to reach the staff's emergency contact, and engage with emergency services when necessary.