

Home workers - health and safety guidelines

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Policy statement and principles

What

New Zealand Police is committed to providing a safe place of work for all of its employees in accordance with public expectations and the requirements of legislation. This extends to those working from home ([home workers](#)).

The [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#) (HSWA) requires persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) to manage hazards in the workplace which is defined as **a place where work is being carried out, or is customarily carried out, for a business or undertaking**. This definition does not distinguish between work performed at the business's premises and work performed from home (or other non-office settings). The PCBU is responsible for worker health and safety regardless of where the employee performs the work.

Police, as a PCBU, have a duty to ensure that work performed by Police employees is done in a safe manner without undue risk to the health and safety of our people.

Employees doing Police work also have a duty to cooperate with Police in all matters of wellness and safety at work and not to endanger the safety of themselves, their co-workers or any other parties through any act or omission that they may undertake. This cooperation is essential to the effective management of workplace safety. Our people must take responsibility for their own safety while at work and perform their duties in a safe manner in accordance with all relevant safe working policies, procedures and guidelines. This includes those employees who may be working from home.

Why

Working from home can present a number of unique risks which are not present in the normal workplace. It is important that both Police and the employee acknowledge this and take steps to identify and manage these risks to mitigate any potential for harm to ensure their health, wellness and safety is maintained when working from home.

Looking after our people and ensuring they can perform their duties safely is a core strategy of [Police business](#).

How

Police demonstrate their commitment to employee safety by developing policies, procedures and guidelines, and providing appropriate resources to enable all employees to undertake their work safely.

These guidelines complement related Police [health and safety policies](#) and provide guidance and tools to identify and manage risks associated with home-based work.

Related information

Internal

[Hazard and Risk Management](#)

[Wellness Hub](#)

[Workstation Assessments](#)

[Recording and reviewing health and safety events](#)

[Maintaining security if working from home or other non-Police sites](#)

[Working remotely in response to COVID-19](#)

External

[Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)

[WorkSafe - Resources for maintaining mentally healthy work at home during COVID-19](#)

Who are home workers?

Home workers are employees who carry out work on behalf of Police from home on an ongoing and regular basis under a formal agreement with their Manager / Supervisor. Employees who occasionally work at home on an informal basis (also with their manager's agreement), are not deemed to be home workers.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsible for...
Home workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - following the guidelines set out in this chapter - completing the Working from Home Checklist and submitting it to their supervisor - following any action plan developed and agreed after submission of the Working from Home Checklist - notifying their supervisor if they believe there is a new risk that they cannot adequately manage to an acceptable level - identifying and managing pain and discomfort early to prevent the progression of gradual process injuries - completing an incident report in MyPolice and submitting that to their supervisor if they are injured as a result of performing their work duties
Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensuring employees follow these guidelines - reviewing Working from Home Checklists submitted by employees, and developing action plans as required - maintaining regular contact with home workers - ensuring home workers are trained to do the tasks they will be expected to perform from home - emailing signed Working from Home Checklists to H&SSaferPeople@police.govt.nz
Health and Safety Advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reviewing action plans if requested by individuals or supervisors.

Risk assessment

Police has a duty to manage risks in the workplace. Risks must be eliminated so far as is reasonably practicable and if the risk cannot be eliminated, it must be minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

Risks to health and safety arise from exposure to hazards - a hazard being anything that can cause harm. Police use a 4 step process to manage risks - risk identification, risk assessment, risk control, and monitoring and review. See the [Hazard and Risk Management](#) policy for more information.

Tools for assessing risks for home workers

Workers and supervisors should ensure they are aware of relevant risks and have applied the associated controls. Common risks and controls are covered within the [Working from Home Checklist](#). A Workstation Assessment can be completed by an employee to get the home office setup right.

Use of the Working from Home Checklist

In addition to applying the risk controls listed in the risk register, all home workers must personally complete a [Working from Home Checklist](#) and submit this to their supervisor. Complete the checklist:

- within one week of commencing work from home
- when moving a home office location (either within the existing home or to a new home)

Upon completion, send the checklist to your supervisor for discussion, development of an action plan if required, and sign-off.

The worker's supervisor should review the form, agree an action plan with the worker to address any unresolved issues raised as the form was being completed, and send a copy to H&SSaferPeople@police.govt.nz. The plan will be retained on an individual's IMS once it is sent to the H&SaferPeople email.

Need assistance completing risk assessment?

If a home worker requires assistance in completing the risk assessment or believes the checklist is insufficient for their needs they should contact their supervisor or their district [Health and Safety Advisor](#). Supervisors may also contact their district Health and Safety Advisor as required for guidance on using the checklist or developing corrective actions for 'No' answers.

Identification and control of hazards

The risk assessment for a home worker is specific to that person, due to their personal circumstances, home/work location and nature of the work intended to be carried out. The following can be used as a guide to typical home risks and controls, but should not be assumed as a replacement for the employee undertaking a full risk assessment of their work area. If the employee identifies risks which they are not adequately managing to minimise the risk they should immediately raise these with their supervisor.

Working area

When choosing a location for working at home:

- try to pick a spot away from sources of glare such as windows, overhead lights, and reflective surfaces
- ensure that the ambient temperature is suitable for working in
- ensure adequate lighting
 - poor lighting can cause visual discomfort, headaches and migraines
 - computer workstation should be uniformly illuminated as far as practical
- the immediate area should be clear of obstructions and in a tidy condition
- cables should not be allowed to extend across the floor
- there should be sufficient space to move about comfortably
- there should be sufficient ventilation
- the furniture in use should be suitable as far as is reasonably practicable.

Social connection

Boost your social connectedness when working from home by:

- scheduling regular meetings and catch ups with your manager and team to help you maintain ongoing contact and foster positive working relationships
- staying connected via phone, email and/or online to keep you across developments of what is happening with work, your team and Police.

Personal wellness

It is important to maintain a sense of personal wellness and health by:

- ensuring work goals are clear and you have the tools and support required to achieve them and progress your own development
- using the [Wellness Hub](#) to help you look after your mental, social, spiritual and physical health to remain fit for work and fit for life
- contacting a [Wellness Advisor](#) for confidential advice, guidance and support to help you manage the challenges and demands of your role.

Privacy and Security

Fortify security and reduce exposure to security and privacy risks by:

- locking your screen when you walk away from it
- checking you are following privacy and security requirements for the type/classification of information you are allowed to work with at home
- following instructions on how to [maintain security while working from home](#).

Other risks

In addition to the above risks a number of other risks unique to working in the home may also need to be considered:

- presence of children or pets
- presence of household objects which may present a risk, e.g. tall cabinets that are unsecured and may fall in an earthquake, or floor rugs that may present a trip hazard
- avoid overloading electrical circuits (no more than one multi-plug box used per outlet)
- an extension cord, when used, must be routed so as to prevent tripping over it

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- moving work equipment in the home - the principles of [safe lifting](#) should be adhered to at all times
- handling of sensitive calls in a home working environment.

Accident and incident reporting

All accidents and incidents related to home working must be reported to your supervisor and via the MyPolice employee self-service portal in accordance with the [Recording and reviewing health and safety events](#) policy.

It is important to identify and [manage pain and discomfort](#) early to prevent the progression of gradual process injuries.

Accidents and incidents that occur while performing work activities in the home environment are considered work events in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. Accidents and incidents that are not associated with work-related activities are not considered work events and do not need to be recorded.

For example, a sprained ankle resulting from tripping over an obstacle in the home workspace while working should be reported and recorded in MyPolice while a sprained ankle from stumbling down the stairs while going to check the mail during a break would not be recordable.

Appendix 1 - Working from Home Checklist

[Download the Working from Home Checklist](#)
