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## Home and Community Visits in the Remote Area Community Setting Procedure

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Effective: 9 May 2016

### 1. Guiding Principles

The One Arm Point, Lombadina, Looma, Warmun and Kalumburu Clinics are designated remote area nursing posts that provide primary healthcare, acute and emergency care service during the business hours. Outside of business hours, Remote Area Nurses (RANs) are required to provide an on-call after hours' emergency service to the remote community.

The Kimberley Population Health Unit has a zero tolerance to workplace aggression and violence, and staff safety is paramount.

### 2. Procedure

#### 1. During Working Hours

##### a. Prior to leaving the clinic:

- i. **Never do a home visit alone**, and consider all options prior to doing a home visit.
- ii. Inform other staff at the clinic which staff are doing a home visit. Tell them:
  1. who you are going to see
  2. when you are leaving
  3. the reason for the visit, whether it was arranged or unarranged
  4. what time you expect to be back
  5. which mobile phone /satellite phone / radio you are taking.
- iii. Take a mobile phone / satellite phone or radio on pre-set channel.

##### b. Safety precautions on arrival at the location

- i. Assess the safety of the location.
- ii. Park the car in a way that allows you to leave quickly, and avoid parking in driveways.
- iii. Ensure that you have the mobile / Satellite phone or radio with you and it is turned on.
- iv. Listen before leaving the vehicle for sounds of altercations, and again prior to knocking at the door obvious signs of drug / alcohol use which may indicate that it is unsafe to proceed. Be observant of community dogs in the area.
- v. If you are asked to leave or refused entry, comply courteously.
- vi. **Personal safety is always the highest priority** - if you feel that safety is threatened, leave immediately and call the police and / or community contacts as soon as you are safe; and await support.
- vii. Notify the Remote Clinic Coordinator (RCC) immediately on 0429 695 548 or 9194 1638 and complete a WACHS-K [Violence and Aggression Form](#) and if necessary, a WACHS [Safety Risk Report Form](#).

### c. Inside the location

- i. Always keep the keys to the vehicle easily accessible.
- ii. Always be aware of and maintain appropriate personal space and distance between yourself and the client.
- iii. Observe for any potential weapons in the area.
- iv. Where possible, position yourself closest to the exit.
- v. Conduct the visit in the most practical location.
- vi. **Personal safety is always the highest priority** - if you feel that safety is threatened, leave immediately and call the police and / or community contacts as soon as you are safe; and await support.
- vii. Notify the RCC immediately on 0429 695 548 or 9194 1638 and complete a WACHS-K [Violence and Aggression Form](#) and if necessary, a WACHS [Safety Risk Report Form](#).
- viii. **If you are unable to return to the clinic within the designated time, inform your colleagues as soon as possible and inform of your new estimated time of return.**

### d. On return to the clinic

- i. Inform the designated contact person of your return
- ii. If you consider the home visit put you at risk, or you had to abandon the visit:
  1. Notify the Remote Clinic Coordinator (RCC) on 0429 695 548 or 9194 1638 and where necessary contact the police and local supports
  2. Complete a WACHS [Safety Risk Report Form](#) and if necessary, a [Violence and Aggression Incident Form](#).

### e. Failure to report back to clinic

If more than 30 minutes has passed since the expected time of return or the agreed contact time and the staff members did not communicate a change the expected time:

- i. The designated contact is to try to contact staff member via the mobile phone or radio.
- ii. If this is unsuccessful, contact the RCC on 0429 695 548 or 9194 1638 and give the details of the visit. If the RCC is unavailable, contact the KPHU Director on 0417 255 379.
- iii. Contact the police and inform them of your concerns and ask the police to check the situation.

## 2. After Hours

- a. After hours calls are to be triaged through the phone/intercom and monitored via the security monitors.
- b. Clients are to be directed to attend the clinic the following day in usual working hours if deemed not an emergency.
- c. **Never do a home visit alone**, and consider all options prior to doing a home visit.
  - i. **Personal safety is always the highest priority** - if you feel that safety is threatened, retreat to a safe area, call police immediately; community contacts; and await support. Notify the Executive on call (EOC) on 1800 669 229 immediately
  - ii. Complete WACHS-K [Violence and Aggression Form](#) as soon as possible after the incident and if necessary a WACHS [Safety Risk Report Form](#).
- d. A responsible person who is not under the influence of drugs or alcohol and with whom staff feel their safety is assured, must be present throughout the consultation.
- e. **Groups of people are not to be admitted to the clinic after hours.**
- f. RANs are **not** to visit clients outside the clinic or in their home after hours unless the client's condition warrants that they not be moved e.g. spinal injury. **A lack of transport is not a valid reason for a community/ home visit.**
- g. In the event of aggressive or violent behaviour, implement LASSIE [aggression management](#).

Listen and hear

Acknowledge the feelings of the person

Separate the person from others

Sit the person down

Indicate the options the person has

Encourage the person to choose a safe plan of action

If de-escalation doesn't work, retreat to a safe area; call for assistance; utilise duress alarm to alert the community; notify the EOC call immediately.

## 3. Definitions

<b>RAN</b>	Remote Area Nurse
<b>RCC</b>	Remote Clinic Coordinator
<b>EOC</b>	Executive on Call
<b>After hours</b>	A period not encompassed by usual working hours
<b>After hours emergency</b>	An injury, medical illness or complaint requiring immediate attention

<b>Usual clinic opening hours</b>	Monday to Wednesday, and Friday 0800hrs -1200hrs and 1300hrs to 1600hrs Thursdays 0800hrs to 1200hrs
<b>Responsible community member</b>	Warden, Police, Councillor, Chairperson or nominated escort that enable staff to feel assured of their own safety whilst attending to a client
<b>Aggression</b>	Verbal or physical abuse, threats, assaults or injury directed at staff, other clients, visitors as well as building or property

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

#### All Staff

All staff are required to work within policies and guidelines to help make sure that employment with WACHS is a safe, equitable and positive experience.

**RANs** are responsible for:

- ensuring their own safety as far as can be reasonably expected
- ensuring a designated person knows where you are and when to expect you back
- only attending emergency home or community visits for clients who are incapacitated and cannot move, **and when it is safe** to do so, and never doing so alone
- ensuring after-hours calls are triaged and all clients presenting for a non-emergency are directed to attend clinic within working hours the next day.
- ensuring only the client and a responsible person are admitted into the clinic after hours.
- advising the responsible person that they are to remain in the clinic while the patient is present, unless the RAN advises them otherwise
- during normal work hours, notifying the RCC immediately after calling the police and community contacts following an incident.
- after hours, notifying the EOC immediately after calling the police and community contacts following an incident.

The **Remote Clinic Coordinator** and **Executive on Call** are responsible for:

- reviewing the staff safety plan
- escalating the incident as required.

### 5. Compliance

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this procedure may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct (under the Department of Health [Misconduct and Discipline Policy](#)), sexual harassment, discrimination, or some other contravention of the law.

Those who fail to comply with this procedure may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment or engagement.

### 6. Evaluation

Monitoring of compliance with this document is to be carried out by the RCC / Kimberley Population Health Unit, every two years using the following means / tools:

- Sentinel Events and/or Datix Clinical Incident Management System ([Datix CIMS](#)) reporting
- Violence and Aggression Incident forms
- Regional Clinical Governance Committee
- Complaints Management System.

### 7. Standards

EQULPNational Standards – Standard 15 Corporate Systems and Safety – Safety management systems - criteria 15.13.1

### 8. Legislation

[Western Australian Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#)

[Western Australian Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#)

- 3.1 Identification of Hazards, and assessing and addressing risks, at workplace
- 3.3 Communications with isolated employees
- 3.6 Movement around the workplace

### 9. References

[Guidance Note – Working Alone 2009](#)

[Western Australian Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#)

WACHS [Working Alone – Home / Community Visiting Guideline 2011](#)

### 10. Related Forms

WACHS-K [Violence and Aggression form](#)

WACHS [Safety Risk Report Form](#)

## 11. Related Policy Documents

[After Hours Remote Clinic Call Out Procedure](#)

[Code Black – Personal Threat response at Remote Area Clinics Procedure](#)

[Emergency Escalation and Support for Remote Area Clinics Procedure](#)

## 12. Related Policies

Department of Health [Operational Circular OP 1821/04 Prevention of Workplace Aggression and Violence](#)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats  
on request for a person with a disability**

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