



Psychosocial Hazard Quick Guide

ISOLATED OR REMOTE WORK

Remote or isolated work refers to **work undertaken in situations where assistance from others is limited due to location, time or the nature of work undertaken**. Individuals undertaking isolated or remote work for prolonged periods or in difficult environments may be susceptible to increased risk of health and safety issues, and this can lead to psychological or physical injury if this experience is **severe, prolonged or frequent**.

A quick guide to managing isolated or remote work is summarised below, to help you understand how to monitor and support any risk within your teams.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Look out for signs of increased risk from isolated or remote work in your team:

THE INDIVIDUAL



- Team members spend long periods of time travelling for work (e.g. *frequent trips away for work or significant commute times*)
- Access to support networks or ability to fulfil family commitments is impacted by work travel
- regular extended or irregular working hours (e.g. *night shifts*)
- Team members regularly spend long periods alone

THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT



- Working locations make access to communication and additional resources difficult or irregular
- Team members work in environments where emergency assistance may be delayed
- Work locations are difficult to access (e.g. *confined spaces*)
- Team members frequently work in unfamiliar environments



POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF ISOLATED OR REMOTE WORK

If instances of isolated or remote work are severe and/or occur frequently over time, it can increase the risk of:



Health and safety issues from exposure to unfamiliar or potentially unsafe environments



Feelings of loneliness, and subsequent mental wellbeing issues

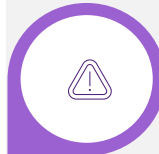


Decreased work-life balance, if the ability to access leisure time or disconnect from work is limited



Difficulties managing team member performance or supervision if contact with them is difficult

When considering the level of risk for this hazard in your team or workplace, remember to ask yourself:

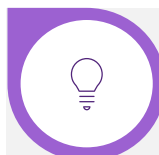
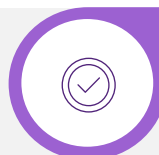


1. How **LONG** have issues been occurring?
2. How **OFTEN** are they occurring?
3. How much do these issues **IMPACT** your team members?

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Some actions you could take as a leader to help improve remote and isolated work:

- ▶ **Minimise the length of time** team members need to work alone (e.g. *travel in pairs*)
- ▶ **Modify services where possible** to reduce required travel (e.g. *virtual delivery*)
- ▶ **Work to ensure support and assistance is available** for team members working in isolation or remotely (e.g. *online team chats*)
- ▶ **Maintain regular supervision** with remote/isolated team members (e.g. *morning and/or afternoon check ins*)
- ▶ **Undertake risk assessments** for remote/isolated work activities and apply relevant controls to minimize risk
- ▶ **Ensure emergency response procedures** are in place for instances of remote or isolated work
- ▶ **Keep yourself and your team up to date** on supports available in relevant remote/isolated work environments



GOOD PRACTICE

Managing remote and isolated work effectively is a continuous process and you should review your knowledge and the effectiveness of your actions regularly.

Keep these tips in mind:



Plan ahead: If you or a team member needs to work remotely or in isolation, take steps to scope out requirements and create a plan



Don't forget to take the basics into account when team members work remotely (e.g. *will they have access to basic amenities on site?*)



Remember to consider both work and non-work environments (e.g. *Is the work site AND personal accommodation safe / secure?*)



Critically assess whether established technology or tools will adapt to remote or isolated work (e.g. *in locations where internet access is unreliable*)