

Residential Workplace Safety

Record of Policy Development

Version	Date approved	Date of last review	Date for next review
2.0	January 2008	July 2021	July 2023

Responsibilities and Delegations

This policy applies to:	Board, CEO, Executive Team, Human Resources, Staff, Volunteers, Students, any individuals acting for and on behalf of Interchange (herein referred to as 'personnel')
Policy Approval	Policy Committee

Policy Context – this policy relates to:

Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Standards for Disability Services (Standard 6) NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators: Core Module 2 Provider Governance and Operational Management
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 Occupations Safety and Health Regulations 1996
Contractual obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDIS terms and conditions
Organisation policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interchange Occupational Safety and Health Policy Interchange Employees and Volunteers Code of Conduct Policy
Forms, record keeping, other documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interchange <i>Residential Workplace Risk Assessment</i> Interchange <i>Incident Work Instruction</i> Interchange <i>Saving Residential Workplace Risk Assessments in Customer Record System Work Instruction</i>
Published	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Policy and Procedure is published on the Interchange website for the ease of access by external parties.

Policy

Interchange provides services in the community, in Interchange buildings and in customer's homes depending on the *Service Agreement* and needs of each customer. Visits to customers' homes will only be made for the purpose of meeting new customers, reviewing support plans and arrangements, providing rostered support, or for ensuring handover information is adequately given and received to provide support.

The principle of safe working requires an Interchange employee to conduct a *Risk Assessment* of all workplace environments this includes residential and community settings. When customer homes become Interchange workplaces it is vital that all precautionary steps are taken to ensure employee safety.

Employee visits to customer homes, or customer visits to employee homes are not permitted without rostered, or express and prior approval of the employee's Line Supervisor.

Home visits by employees will only be made if there has been a prior appointment agreed with the customer and if the visit is authorised by the Team Leader or Senior Manager.

For safeguarding purposes, Interchange customers should not be brought to employee homes during the delivery of supports without the prior and express permission of the Executive Manager People & Culture or the CEO. This permission would generally only be granted under exceptional circumstances, where a formal arrangement has been made, and a risk assessment has been completed and endorsed.

This policy is particularly important as a risk mitigation in and of itself is when an employee makes an unaccompanied visit to an unknown home, usually for a first meeting with a prospective customer, and therefore several additional safeguarding procedures have been stipulated to enhance employee safety.

Procedures

- There is a hierarchy of risk mitigation that an employee must undertake when arranging meetings with new customers.
 1. Meeting at an Interchange premise
 2. Meeting at a public location
 3. Meeting at the customer's home with another person (colleague/stakeholder etc)
 4. Meeting at the customer's home unaccompanied
- Where possible, the first meeting should take place at an Interchange office or an appropriate public location.
- In any event, there will come a time at which there is a first visit to a customer's home. The *Residential Risk Assessment Form* is the document on which identified hazards will be risk assessed. The general nature of the use of this Form is as follows:
- At the time of arranging the first meeting at a customer's home the employee will complete the Pre-Start section of the Form. This is done over the phone to determine if there are any concerns or hazards on the property or in the house via conversation and question and answers.
- Upon arrival at the property an observational risk assessment will be completed from the vehicle of the front yard, house, neighbouring properties and general location to determine if entering the property is safe. Contact will then be made to a colleague notifying of their arrival and that they intend to enter the property. If the employee believes it is unsafe to enter, they will leave immediately.
- After entering the house, the employee will make observations noting any potential hazards which may include animals, excessive clutter, unsanitary conditions or behaviours of concern exhibited by any occupants. If the employee has any uncertainty for their safety, they may leave the house or explain to the customer the organisation's safety protocol of "phoning in to their supervisor." The employee will then go outside to make this call and discuss their concerns with their supervisor. This situation must be documented as an Incident in the Customer Record System.

- Should there be no concerns from the employee, the meeting will go ahead.
- At the end of the meeting the employee will return to their vehicle and complete the remaining sections of the risk assessment and notify the same colleague that the meeting is complete.

If the Employee does not phone in

- If the employee's colleague does not receive the call that they are safe, they are to call the employee. If they are unable to gain reassurance that all is well, they are to immediately notify their Line Supervisor.
- The Line Supervisor will attempt to contact the employee. If unsuccessful they will notify an Executive Manager to consult with them prior to calling the Police.

After the visit

- Any observed hazards are to be documented on the risk assessment.
- The *Residential Risk Assessment Form* will be saved and uploaded to Customer Record System.
- Any hazards that require consultation with the customer for resolution should be discussed with the relevant Team Leader and People & Culture Coach prior to the commencement of services.
- Hazards will be documented on the Customer Record System.

Safeguarding for arranged meetings (excludes general support)

- All meetings in customer or family homes must be logged in advance in the employee's Outlook calendar with details including customer name and address, and contact numbers of known attendees.
- A mobile phone must be taken by the employee with important numbers saved.
- The employee will make an observational assessment of the location to determine if they feel safe to enter the property and only proceed if confident in their safety.
- The employee will leave the premises immediately if safety concerns arise during the course of the meeting.
- Where a concern about safety has been noted an *Incident* will be completed on Customer Record System and be escalated to their line supervisor as appropriate

General safeguarding requirements

- Employees will not enter the premises if they do not feel safe to do so and will report concerns to their Line Supervisor immediately.
- If an employee feels unsafe at any time, they should leave the premises at the earliest opportunity, and call their Line Supervisor immediately.
- The *Residential Workplace Risk Assessment Form* will be completed for all customers and reviewed annually by the relevant Community Engager.
- Employees must review the completed *Residential Workplace Risk Assessment Form* for each customer they work with periodically and report new hazards noted as an *Incident* when/if they are identified.
- New hazards, risks or concerns may trigger a review of the support arrangements and may require a revised *Residential Workplace Risk Assessment Form* to be completed. This will replace the existing uploaded form using the "Replace File function" in the Customer Record System. Never delete uploaded *Residential Workplace Risk Assessments*.
- New hazards may trigger a review of the *Service Agreement* and service delivery.
- Service parameters will be adhered to by employees as instructed by their Line Supervisor.

- A mobile phone should always be carried by all employees with important numbers saved.
- Should an employee not be free to leave the premises for any reason, they are to call the Police immediately.
- The safety and wellbeing of employee and customers are the highest priority and must be put before any other considerations.