Check-in Frequency Decision Guide

This document is intended to help guide the process of choosing how often a worker should check in while working alone. This is done by classifying a workplace as a high risk, medium risk, or low risk work environment.

Definitions of Hazardous Environments and Examples of Common Workplace Hazards

High Risk Workplace

Definition: Likely to result in serious injury, psychological harm, or life-threatening situations, especially when no help is available.

Recommended check-in: High frequency (every 30 minutes-2 hours)

Examples:

- Home visits with clients who have a history of violence, substance use, or unpredictable behavior
- Outreach in remote or isolated areas without reliable communication (e.g. no cell service)
- Night-time crisis response in high-risk locations (e.g. parks, shelters, streets)
- Responding to mental health crises (e.g., suicide threats, psychosis) without backup
- Working alone in an unsecured or poorly controlled environment (e.g., no exit route, locked in)

Medium Risk Workplace

Definition: May result in injury or harm, but the risk can be mitigated with appropriate controls.

Recommended check-in: Moderate frequency (every 2 - 4 hours)

Examples:

- First-time meeting with unknown clients in the office or public setting
- Driving alone in bad weather or unfamiliar areas
- Transporting clients in a vehicle alone
- Working outside of regular hours (e.g. early mornings, evenings)
- Being alone in the office/building with public access (e.g. drop-in centre, front desk)
- Providing services in client homes where no prior risk is identified, but the environment is uncontrolled

Low Risk Workplace

Definition: Unlikely to result in harm, or the likelihood and severity are both low.

Recommended check-in: Low frequency (every 4 - 8 hours)

Examples:

- Office-based work during normal hours with other staff in the building
- Phone or virtual support sessions conducted from a secure environment
- Driving alone in daylight on known, low-risk routes with full comms
- Outreach to well-known clients in safe public places (e.g., coffee shops, libraries)
- Administrative tasks or data entry from home

Tips for Assigning Risk Levels:

When deciding if something is high/medium/low risk consider:

1. Client Factors:
   - History of aggression or unpredictable behavior?
   - Substance use and/or mental health concerns?
   - Is there a barrier preventing communication with client?
   - Is client physically able to move on their own?

2. Nature of work:
   - Does the work have high inherent risk?

3. Environment
   - Is it remote, poorly lit, or unfamiliar?
   - What hazards are present within the environment?
   - Is there a reliable escape route?

4. Time of Day:
   - Are you working after hours, alone in the building, or in the dark?
   - Are you working for a long period of time with no contact with others?

5. Communication:
   - Is there a check-in/check-out system?
   - Is emergency help available and reachable?

6. Worker Factors:
   - Does the worker have training, de-escalation skills, PPE, and support?
   - Does the worker have medical conditions or disabilities that may require more frequent monitoring