

Co-operative Assistance Network Limited

Safe Remote Working Policy

Context

Self-responsibility and Caring for Others are Co-operative Values, underpinning concepts in Health and Safety legislation and good practice.

It is a condition of employment of all CAN personnel that they consider and take steps to minimise risks to their co-workers and to themselves.

The following are useful guidelines and tick lists. There is, however, no substitute for the application of good sense and consideration.

General

Consider not only what might happen but also what an unscrupulous or unreasonable client might say happened.

Inculcate a sense of defensive awareness.

Never assume that a host organisation – even one established for centuries with millions of pounds worth of resources and staff of hundreds – is perfect from a health and safety point of view.

Working Locations - Public Places

When booking locations to carry out training and advice and guidance sessions check that:

- There are other people present on the premises (ideally of the host organisation)
- It is safe for access and escape for the people who will be present.

When working in such locations, especially for the first time, arrive early enough to check out:

- Fire drill
- Escape routes
- That access and escape routes are clear of impediment
- That equipment is safe
- First aid arrangements

Working Locations - Clients' Places of Work

When agreeing to carry out training and advice and guidance sessions at a client's place of work:

- Try to ensure that there will be more than one person present
- Tell some-one else in CAN where you are going

- Call them when you leave

Working Locations - Private Homes

In general do not. There may be instances where the situation of a client through disability, care responsibilities etc. means that they are unable to leave their homes. Very few people are genuinely prisoners in their own homes and it is better to find a time when they are able to make an appointment in a public building. If you feel the visit has to be made:

- Try to ensure that there will be more than one person present
- Tell some-one else in CAN where you are going
- Call them when you leave

Equipment

- When booking equipment such as projectors to use at venues check that the host organisation does carry out portable appliance testing
- When using other organisation's equipment always check it yourself thoroughly visually anyway before plugging in / use
- When carrying CAN equipment to other venues try not to make it obvious that you are carrying items of value sufficient to invite opportunist mugging.
- To avoid operating with unsafe cabling arrangements take a CAN extension cable and black/yellow carpet tape to venues where you have not previously checked layout and equipment.

Travel

- Make sure you know exactly where you are going and have plenty of time to get there, being lost and late causes stress and leads to poor health and safety decisions.
- Public transport, where available and effective, is recommended by CAN as more ecologically sound and more time (and therefore cost) effective. It is also inherently far safer than private transport in terms of injury per journey mile. However, the over-riding concern is safety. If, in your judgement, using a private car to undertake a particular piece of remote working is the safer option then this is what you must do.
- Like-wise, if it is your judgement that a particular journey merits a taxi journey on health and safety grounds even though the distance is walk-able, the weather fine etc. do not talk yourself out of it. Take the cab.
- Follow the guidelines set out in CAN's Safe Travelling Policy.

Working from Home

This is an option that is allowed by CAN to maximise flexibility and allow workers to harmonise work and other aspects of their lives. Some workers live at too great a distance from a CAN office to be expected to work at the office and sometimes CAN does not run an office. In these cases, there is an agreement that a worker's normal place of work is at home.

Workers working at home still have a responsibility to ensure that they are working as safely as possible. The facility is expressly not extended in order to encourage workers to type working papers with one hand and dice carrots with the other.

You should still be equipped with, for example, a comfortable upright chair and a flat working surface. You should still have an adequate first-aid box. Cabling should still be safe and sockets not overloaded. If you require investment in your home-working environment to make it safe and comfortable talk to Support Services

You should still take regular breaks from staring at a VDU even if there is no colleague to engage in conversation or make a cup of coffee for. You should still not run up and down stairs with a lap-top computer open on the palm of your hand. Safe home-working requires a greater degree of discipline than does working in an environment set out for work under the watchful and supportive eyes of caring co-workers.

There should be a functional fire extinguisher of an appropriate type on the premises. This can be provided by CAN.

There should be an Accident Book on the premises. This can also be provided by CAN.

Remember that Health and Safety legislation applies. If you require guidance on this, you should contact CAN's Health and Safety Appointed Officer.

CAN's Health and Safety Appointed Officer will require a Risk Analysis of your home working environment to be carried out on a regular basis. You are required to co-operate with this and with the implementation of any actions that arise from it.

If you find that working from home may be causing psychological problems such as stress or isolation, you should raise your concern with any Director and not allow the problem to get out of control. Remember: CAN is a co-operative and stands against the exploitation of workers.

CAN cannot be held responsible if you get into trouble because you have chosen not to fully comply with this policy.

Responsible Department: Health & Safety

Implementation Date: 26th April 2013

Review period: [not set]

Next review due: [currently under review]

Agreed at Directors Meeting of [unknown]

Passed at Members Meeting of 26th April 2013