

Working out of the Office Policy

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Policy Owner and Approval

- The Owner of this policy is the Human Resources Advisor.
- This Policy has been approved by the Chief Executive.
- The Committee responsible is the Human Resources Committee.

Review Date

July 2016

Effective Date

30 April 2012

Introduction

Purpose and Scope

Southern Response recognises that it has statutory obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 to provide a safe and healthy environment for all personnel members participating in out of the office activities. Accordingly there is a need for some general and specific guidance on integrating health and safety principles into work undertaken external to the office environment, to ensure we comply with this and related legislation.

This Policy applies to all Southern Response Personnel who undertake work outside of the Southern Response Office environments. Common examples include:

- Visits to key stakeholders (e.g. customers, Arrow etc.)
- Visits to external providers of products and services (e.g. Printers, Banks etc.)
- Travel during the course of a working day to present at or participate in training courses or external business meetings.

Definitions

- **Manager and Management** - refers to Team Leaders, Team Managers, Unit Managers and Managers;
- **Out of the Office Activity** – any authorised and approved activity that takes place outside of any of Southern Response's offices where participating personnel members are deemed to be working;
- **Personnel** - Applies to all employees and other personnel providing services to Southern Response (e.g. independent contractors), together defined as "Southern Response Personnel".

Policy

Statement

At Southern Response, we recognise that safe and healthy working environments are a significant part of a successful employment relationship and an excellent business. By integrating health and safety into our everyday work practices, we will effectively achieve our strategic objectives. In addition to establishing health and safety policies and processes for the office environment, we must also ensure that work undertaken outside of the Office is performed in a safe and healthy way.

Personnel in certain roles (e.g. Building and Quality Assessors) are required to carry out a significant proportion of their work outside the office environment. It is important that these activities are conducted in a manner that demonstrates that all practicable steps are taken to provide for the safety and health of all participants.

This means that personnel participating in out of the office activities have a responsibility with respect to protecting their wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.

Management Responsibilities

The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for the safe, healthy and effective management of all out of the office activities and requires every manager with the responsibility for personnel involved in these activities, to implement this policy.

Planning and Identifying Potential Hazards

It is the Manager's responsibility to evaluate the need for and the appropriateness of work undertaken outside of the office and if it is considered necessary to plan appropriately to ensure that the wellbeing of personnel is not compromised at any time during the activity.

Planning includes conducting a pre-visit hazard analysis so as to ensure that controls can be put in place to at least minimise each hazard.

To maximise the benefit taken from the appointment the following factors should be given consideration:

- Whether a visit is the best approach to achieve the necessary outcome;
 - Whether the personnel member's level of experience is relative to the task;
 - Whether the appointment has the potential to lead to a disagreement, and if so, what steps can be taken to minimise risk at the outset. If there is prospect of contention, consideration should be given as to whether the visit is to be undertaken at all;
 - If a less experienced personnel member is to undertake the visit, whether it is appropriate for a more experienced team member to accompany them in a support capacity;
 - Whether specific personal clothing and safety equipment is required;
 - Whether there is the need to notify any Government department or authority e.g. CERA of the personnel member's presence in any location.
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Inappropriate Visits

No Southern Response personnel member should:

- visit, or make a return visit to a person who has shown themselves to be aggressive or threatening;
- make a visit without first gaining an understanding of the customer's insurance history making an appointment to meet at an agreed time and location;
- enter a property/house if they feel uncomfortable either because of the environment or the demeanour of the person they were planning to visit. Instead they should, as soon as possible, telephone and explain the broken appointment and make alternative arrangements;
- make a visit or home inspection before 8:00am or after 7:00PM, or during darkness hours unless they have the prior approval from the Manager;

However if a personnel member believes a visit is absolutely necessary despite the existence of one or more of the above factors, then safety measures should be discussed with their Manager before any appointment is made and the Manager should attend with the personnel member.

Meetings Out of the Office

At out of office meetings (such as at Arrow or CERA) it is the chairperson or facilitator's responsibility to ensure all attendees are briefed on:

- the position of the fire exits;
- evacuation assembly points;
- particular facilities and features of hazards found at the location.

In the absence of a briefing, it is the responsibility of the Southern Response personnel member to ensure they acquire the above information at the start of the meeting.

Driving for Business Purposes

Drivers of Southern Response vehicles must:

- have read, understood and accepted the Vehicle Use Policy and completed a Driver Agreement Form (Appendix 2 of Vehicle Use Policy) prior to using a vehicle
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Laptop Ergonomics

Laptop users should remember that normal ergonomic principles apply when working away from the office.

Trips should be planned so that most typing is done back at the office desk. If personnel members are working at home or in an out of office venue (motel/hotel) they need to remember to consider heating, lighting and take regular breaks, micro pauses and exercises.

Note Taking in Vehicles

If writing notes in a vehicle, personnel members should ensure:

- Cars are parked safely and legally;
 - Notes are kept brief so most of the recording can be done back at the office.
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Scene Inspections

When undertaking visits to customers properties or taking photographs, personnel members should:

- Ensure their manager knows of the intended visit (in case of emergency);
 - Ensure they have cell phones available for use if necessary;
 - Wear full Personal Protective Equipment – (high visibility vest, safety footwear and hard hat), per the Health and Safety legislation and policy;
 - Park in a safe place;
 - Obey the road and pedestrian rules at ALL times;
 - Maintain an awareness of their surroundings e.g. remain visible and conscious of traffic and pedestrians at all times;
 - In conjunction with the property owner, identify hazards of the property from the footpath or roadway – if in doubt contact a member of the Building & Quality Assessment Team.
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“Red Stickered” Properties

Personnel members are not to enter “Red Stickered” properties unless accompanied by a Chartered Professional Engineer.

The above guidelines for Scene Inspections must be followed.

Potential hazards (sink holes, fissures) must be identified before proceeding and if there is evidence for concern DO NOT proceed and seek advice from a member of the Building & Quality Assessment Team.

Relevant Links

- Relevant References and Resources**
- Health and Safety in Employment Act (1993)
 - Ethical Behaviour Policy
 - Mobile Phone Use Policy
 - Vehicle Use Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Description
0.1	23.04.12	██████	Policy Created
0.2	1.06.12	██████	Incorporating feedback from Acting Chief Corporate Officer
0.3	5/06/2012	S Giles	Incorporate feedback from CE
1.0	19/8/2014	S Giles	Incorporate HR updates

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SOUTHERN RESPONSE EARTHQUAKE SERVICES LTD