

OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY & HEALTH OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

Subject: Animals/Pets in the Client's Environment/Home
Community/Corporate Health Services and Winnipeg Integrated Services (WIS)

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(version 1)

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Original Signed by: Shaun Haas, Regional Director, WRHA Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) and Department of Families recognize that the human animal bond is very strong and especially important to those individuals who require assistance in day to day life. The purpose of this operational procedure is to balance the WRHA and Department of Families' responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace for staff with the needs of the client.

Some hazards associated with animals/pets are: biting, tripping, aggressive behaviour, excited state, protective behaviour, jumping, scratching, and barking. In addition, some staff may have allergies or phobias/fears related to animals.

1.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 In keeping with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) and Department of Families commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace as noted in the WRHA 'Workplace Safety and Health' policy (20.20.030), and Department of Families Workplace Safety and Health Policy, the following Operational Procedure has been developed to ensure these policies are supported by identifying known and potential hazards to workers related to animals/pets in the client's environment/home, assessing the risks, implementing control measures to reduce or control these hazards, and communicating this information to staff when visiting client's environment/home.
- 1.2 The WRHA Community Health Services Management Team along with Department of Families is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. We want all employees to feel safe and be safe. To accomplish this, we expect all supervisors and managers to take a clear, consistent and supportive role in handling issues in the community, and all workers to share in the responsibility for their personal safety and to communicate unsafe conditions to their supervisors.
- 1.3 This Operational Procedure must be applied fairly and evenly throughout the Winnipeg Health Region.

- 1.4 This operational procedure is also designed to ensure that when followed the minimum requirements of Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health legislation is complied with and where possible exceeded.
 - 1.5 As with all matters relating to the safety and health of workers the Workplace Safety and Health Committee should be consulted for their input.
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2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **The Act:** The Workplace Safety and Health Act W210 of Manitoba.
- 2.2 **Committee:** Means a workplace (occupational) safety and health committee established under section 40 of the Workplace Safety and Health Act.
- 2.3 **Employer:**
 - 2.3.1 Every person who, by himself or his agent or representative employs or engages one or more workers,
 - 2.3.2 And, The Crown and every agency of the government.
- 2.4 **Supervisor:** Means a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.
- 2.5 **Worker/Employee:**
 - 2.5.1 Any person who is employed by an employer to perform a service whether for gain or reward, or hope of gain or reward or not.
 - 2.5.2 Any person engaged by another person to perform services, whether under a contract of employment or not.
 - 2.5.3 Any person undergoing training or serving an apprenticeship at an education institution or at any other place.
- 2.6 **Director:** means the person administratively responsible for the department or unit. Director includes heads of departments.
- 2.7 **OESH:** refers to the Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health Unit, WRHA.
- 2.8 **SHU:** refers to the Safety and Health Unit, Department of Families.
- 2.9 **Animals/Pets:** This includes, but is not limited to dogs, cats, birds, reptiles such as snakes, lizards, and/or rodents such as rabbits, rats, hamsters, and guinea pigs. This definition includes all animals for which the client is willingly caring for either permanently or temporarily. This definition does not include infestations.
- 2.10 **Behavioural History:** Information gathered including but not limited to the animal's behaviour, temperament and possibility of aggression. This includes past and present behaviour. Examples include but are not limited to biting, scratching, jumping, protective behaviour, and growling.
- 2.11 **Client's Environment:** Sites/areas where care/service is provided which are not WRHA or Department of Families facilities, sites or offices including but not limited to: client's homes, hotels, apartment buildings, rooming houses, residential care facilities, shelters, supported living facilities.
- 2.12 **Prohibited Animals:** as defined in Appendix A of the [City of Winnipeg By-Law 92/2013 Responsible Pet Ownership](#).

- 2.13 **Prohibited dog breeds** as defined in the City of Winnipeg By-Law 92/2013 *Responsible Pet Ownership*: a dog which has the appearance and physical characteristics predominantly conforming to the standards of the Canadian Kennel Club or the United Kennel Club for any of the following breeds:
- American Pit Bull Terrier;
 - Staffordshire Bull Terrier;
 - American Staffordshire Terrier.
- 2.14 **Running at large**: means that an animal is not
- either on its owner's property, or on other property with the consent of the owner or occupant;
 - securely confined in a vehicle or other enclosure; and
 - securely leashed and in the custody of someone competent to control it.
- 2.15 **Stray Animals**: This includes animals which are not known to, owned or cared for by the client but are loose in the client's surrounding environment, mainly outdoors.
- 2.16 **Free Roaming Animals**: Includes animals which are known to, owned and cared for by the client and are loose in the client's home environment whether indoors or outdoors.
- 2.17 **Secured**: Ensuring that the animal is kept in a separate area of the home environment and cannot come into contact with staff.
- 2.18 **Safety Assessment Form Tool (SAFT) and Safe Visit Plan Form (SVP)**: Form used for identification of known and potential hazards which are/may be present in a client's environment.
- 2.19 **Safe Visit Plan Form and Safe Visit Plan (SVP)**: Form used to develop controls to reduce/eliminate risk to staff based on the hazards identified on the SAFT. These controls are used to develop a Safe Visit Plan which is communicated to staff members providing care to a specific client. It outlines any hazards that they may encounter and controls that have been put into place to protect them from these hazards.
- 2.20 **Service Animal**: An animal trained or being trained for a person with a disability for reasons related to his or her disability, or that has been trained to be used by a peace officer or person authorized by a peace officer in the execution/assistance of the peace officer's duties. Service Animals are working animals.
NOTE: While most Service Animals are dogs, there are other types of animals that assist persons with disabilities in their day-to-day activities as Service Animals. Personal pets/comfort animals (approved by the facility to visit a specific patient) and therapy animals (screened by recognized organization to provide emotional/social support to Patients) are not Service Animals.
- 2.21 **Low Risk**: Animals/pets including:
- 2.21.1 Service animals, or
 - 2.21.2 Animals that are contained in an enclosed space and not able to come into contact with staff, or
 - 2.21.3 Animals that are able to move freely inside the client's environment/home with no evidence of current or past aggression and that remain in other areas of the environment.

- 2.22 **Medium Risk:** Animals/pets that are able to move freely inside the client's environment/home with no evidence of current or past aggression that may come into contact with staff.
- 2.23 **High Risk:** Animals/pets that are able to move freely inside the client's environment/home with evidence history of current or past aggression that come into contact with staff.

3.0 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

- 3.1 This operational procedure applies to:
- 3.1.1 all animals/pets and it is not dependant on the animal/pet's behaviour, personality traits and/or on the employee's comfort level.
 - 3.1.2 all visitors, client's family members, neighbours or associates who may be present with their animals/pets in the client's environment/home during the provision of service.
 - 3.1.3 animals/pets for which the client is temporarily caring for (e.g. dog or cat sitting).
- 3.2 This operational procedure **does not** apply to
- 3.2.1 employees who have allergies to, or personal phobias related to animals. In these situations, the WRHA OESH Operational Procedure: Reasonable Accommodation and Return to Work is to be followed and is based on the medical documentation provided.
 - 3.2.2 facilities such as hospitals, personal care homes, etc. who are enrolled in pet therapy programs.
 - 3.2.3 stray animals encountered in the client's environment (e.g. stray dogs) as identified in the neighborhood concerns section of the SAFT (see Section 1.b. in the SAFT).
- 3.3 Each site/program must implement a program which consists of the following:
- 3.3.1 Risk Identification (Safety Assessment Form Tool - SAFT).
 - 3.3.2 Elimination and/or control of risks including but not limited to Safe Visit Plans (SVP) and Safe Work Procedures (SWP) where applicable based on all hazards identified on the SAFT.
 - 3.3.3 Communication of the hazard and the controls to affected employees.
 - 3.3.4 Training.
 - 3.3.5 Enforcement; an employer must ensure that employees comply with the safe visit plan and/or safe work procedures.
- 3.4 The Safety Assessment Form Tool (SAFT) must be completed for ALL clients.
- 3.5 The Safety Assessment Form Tool (SAFT) is used to identify if a client has any animals/pets. Check box if *no* animals within the home/site. Other Information gathered if there are animals in the home includes:
- 3.5.1 type of animals/breed
 - 3.5.2 number of animals
 - 3.5.3 names of animals
 - 3.5.4 past and current behaviour of animals
 - 3.5.5 issues related to fecal/urine elimination by animals
 - 3.5.6 client's ability to secure animals
 - 3.5.7 client's ability/willingness to follow WRHA Operational Procedure
 - 3.5.8 identification of any equipment in the client care environment
 - 3.5.9 risk level
 - 3.5.10 presence of stray animals (Section 1.b. of SAFT)

- 3.6 If animals/pets are identified in the SAFT:
- 3.6.1 The client must be provided with written information outlining the steps that must be taken to ensure staff, client/patient, and pet safety while providing care. *E.g. Home Care Client Expectation sheet – Animals – Pets in the Home.*
 - 3.6.2 A SVP must be developed in consultation with client for all identified medium and high risk hazards (per Section 2.a. of the SAFT).
 - 3.6.3 Staff must be notified either verbally and/or in writing that there is a pet(s) of any type in the home, regardless of risk level. Written notification to staff should be a used as a follow-up to the verbal notification whenever possible.
- 3.7 Development of the Safe Visit Plan (SVP) must include the following:
- 3.7.1 Length and frequency of visits (identified in SAFT) (page 1)
 - 3.7.2 Animal type/breed/number and names of animal(s)
 - 3.7.3 Whether animal is secured at all times or free roaming
 - 3.7.4 Behavioural history of animal(s)
 - 3.7.5 Risk level (low, medium, high risk)
 - 3.7.5.1 Service Animal – low risk. A SVP is not required. Staff must be notified that there is an animal in the home as well as the animal type/breed, name, and a reference to the [WRHA Policy 10.60.010 Access for Person with Service Animals](#). This animal may remain close to the client.

Animals/pets that are contained in an enclosed space and not able to come into contact with staff are considered low risk. Staff must be notified of the presence of animals, type/breed, number and name(s). A SVP is not required.

Animals/pets that are able to move freely inside the client's environment/home with no evidence of current or past aggression that remain in other areas of the environment are considered low risk. Animals will not come into contact with staff. Staff must be notified of the presence of animals, type/breed, number and name(s). A SVP is not required.
 - 3.7.5.2 Animals/pets that are able to move freely inside the client's environment/home with no evidence of current or past aggression that may come into contact with staff are considered medium risk. A SVP is required.
 - 3.7.5.3 Animals/pets that are able to move freely inside the client's environment/home with history of current or past aggression that may come into contact with staff are considered high risk. A SVP is required.
 - 3.7.6 Impact of client functional status on ability to secure animal (identified in SAFT) (Section 2a.)
 - 3.7.7 Availability of family members etc. to assist with implementation of the SVP (Section 2a. in SVP)
 - 3.7.8 Client environment and resources (cage, kennel, fenced yard, private area to provide client care, etc).
 - 3.7.9 If plan is weather dependent, where applicable.
 - 3.7.10 Direction for unsecured animals.

- 3.7.11 Direction(s) to follow if client/family has not followed outlined SVP.
- 3.8 Excluding Service Animals, every effort must be made and documented to contain or secure all low, medium and high risk animals/pets.
- 3.8.1 The animal/pet must not be able to come in close proximity to the employee. The animals/pets need to remain away from WRHA and Department of Families employees until the employee has left the client's environment/home.
- 3.8.2 These animals/pets may be placed in rooms with closed doors, in a kennel, or there could be a barricade/barrier in place to prevent the animal/pet from leaving the enclosed area and coming into contact with a WRHA and/or Department of Families employee.
- 3.8.3 If the animal/pet is to be in the front and/or back yard during the provision of client service, the animal/pet may remain there as long as WRHA and Department of Families employees do not have to walk by the animal/pet and the animal/pet cannot be in close proximity or in contact with the employee.
- 3.8.4 For animals/pets which are contained in an enclosed space (e.g. cage, kennel, aquarium), the client is to ensure that the enclosure is properly secured so that the animal/pet cannot escape from the enclosure. The cage doors need to be secured and the aquariums need to have a properly secured lid.
- 3.9 In the event that a client is unable to contain a **medium or high risk** animal/pet, a Safe Visit Plan (SVP) must be developed in consultation with the client and/or caregiver. The client and /or caregiver is responsible for insuring the pet does not adversely affect the care being provided to the client or staff safety. This will be indicated on the SVP.
- 3.10 Where the ability to provide care is directly impacted by the behaviour of the animal - distracting worker from task, reducing ability of worker to perform task, danger to animal from equipment, etc. – the affected staff must report the concerns to their direct supervisor for resolution. Every effort must be made to implement a workable SVP and deliver client services provided staff safety is not affected.
- 3.11 The following animals cannot be in the care provision area: sick animals, animals with fleas or any disease that is communicable to humans, animals that have not been properly vaccinated or that have internal or external parasites, dogs that bark or behave aggressively or animals that present issues related to fecal/urine elimination.
- 3.12 Alternative ways for providing care to the client and/or placing client care on hold should be considered in consultation with management in situations including but not limited to the following:
- 3.12.1 there are repeated non-compliance issues with medium or high risk animals
- 3.12.2 the client cannot or is not adhering to this Operational Procedure or to the SVP
- 3.12.3 there is a "Prohibited Animal" in the client's environment
- 3.12.4 there is a "Prohibited Dog Breed" in the client's environment unless the client has complied with section 7(2) of the [City of Winnipeg By-Law 92/2013](#) .
- 3.13 Communication and documentation of SAFT and SVP are as follows:
- 3.13.1 All employees attending a client home must be notified if the client has animals/pets in their environment/home. Note: This notification includes service animals.
- 3.13.2 The SVP must be provided to all WRHA and Department of Families employees who have a "need to know" by virtue of providing care to the client.

- 3.13.3 The SAFT will be made available where applicable.
- 3.13.4 The SAFT (if applicable) and SVP must be available to health care partners (e.g. hospital staff) where the information is necessary for the provision of safe care for client, family, and employees.
- 3.13.5 A copy of the SAFT and SVP shall be placed in the client's office file.
- 3.14 A re-assessment/screening including a new SAFT and where applicable a SVP must be completed and communicated to staff by the fastest means possible if:
 - 3.14.1 There is a negative change in the animal's behaviour;
 - 3.14.2 When new or additional hazards are identified;
 - 3.14.3 Other than a service animal, when there is non-compliance such as a "low risk" animal that is not kept in an enclosed space and comes in contact with the staff (no longer considered low risk); and/or,
 - 3.14.4 When the situation with the client and/or in client's environment changes.
- 3.15 The SAFT and the SVP must be reviewed/updated annually or at other times when the client's care plan is reviewed as per program specific guidelines.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Employer

- 4.1.1 Act in accordance with the objects and purposes of the Act by ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all his workers, and complying with the Act and Regulations.
- 4.1.2 Ensure that all his workers, and particularly his managers, supervisors, care providers or similar persons are acquainted with any safety or health hazards which may be encountered by the workers in the course of their service, and that workers are familiar with plans and directives to reduce risk of harm from identified hazards.

4.2 Person Receiving Intake/Referral in Community (e.g. Central Intake, Central Nursing Intake):

- 4.2.1 Initiates the SAFT through discussion with the client and/or contact person and/or referral source.
- 4.2.2 Identifies on the SAFT if the client has animals/pets in the appropriate section of the SAFT. Client can be asked over the phone if there are animals/pets in their environment/home.
- 4.2.3 Sends the SAFT to service provider along with the referral form as per program guidelines.

4.3 Person Receiving Intake/Referral in Hospital (Hospital-Based Case Coordinator):

- 4.3.1 Initiates the SAFT through discussion with the client and/or contact person and/or referral source.
- 4.3.2 Identifies on the SAFT if the client has animals/pets in the appropriate section of the SAFT.
- 4.3.3 Reviews potential risks with the client and reviews the written information outlining the steps that must be taken to ensure staff, client/patient, and pet safety while providing care. *E.g. Home Care Client Expectation sheet – Animals – Pets in the Home.*

- 4.3.4 Completes a SVP where applicable. Obtains additional information as required.
 - 4.3.5 If client/family is not able or willing to comply with this Operational Procedure, develops further SVPs to mitigate the risks.
 - 4.3.6 Seeks advice, support and direction from Team Manager and other parties as needed to develop plan (e.g. unusual SVP, circumstances etc.).
 - 4.3.7 Communicates the SAFT and SVP with other service providers as required immediately upon completion.
- 4.4 **Coordinator for the Client (e.g. Case Manager, Case Coordinator, Community Mental Health Worker, Service Coordinator or Nurse for nursing coordinated only clients):**
- 4.4.1 Upon receipt and review of the referral, the Coordinator for the client:
 - 4.4.1.1 Completes SAFT and the SVP when applicable.
 - 4.4.1.2 Reviews potential risks and the written information outlining the steps that must be taken to ensure staff, client/patient, and pet safety while providing care. *E.g. Home Care Client Expectation sheet – Animals – Pets in the Home.*
 - 4.4.1.3 Develops further SVPs to mitigate the risks If client/family is not able or willing to comply with this Operational Procedure.
 - 4.4.1.4 Seeks advice, support and direction from Team Manager and other parties as needed to develop plan.
 - 4.4.1.5 Shares the SAFT and the SVP with other service providers as required.
 - 4.4.1.6 Reports any changes in the SAFT and the SVP to those involved.
 - 4.4.1.7 Ensures that the SAFT and the SVP are also documented in designated area in the program specific location in electronic or paper client files.
- 4.5 **Coordinator for Direct Service Staff (e.g. Nursing Resource Coordinator, Resource Coordinator, Public Health Leads):**
- 4.5.1 Receives and reviews client referral, SAFT and when applicable the SVP.
 - 4.5.2 Support and participate in the SVP development with Case Managers/Case Coordinators if needed.
 - 4.5.3 Communicates to direct service staff that there are animals/pets in the client's environment/home.
 - 4.5.4 Communicates the SVP and provides a copy of the SVP to direct service staff. A meeting may be required in complex situations.
 - 4.5.5 Receives information from staff and notify service provider if a change in SAFT and/or SVP is required.
 - 4.5.6 Monitors the effectiveness of this Operational Procedure and the SVP through discussions with employees.
 - 4.5.7 Ensures that SAFT and SVP are documented in designated area in the program specific location in electronic client files and staff scheduling tools as per program guidelines.

- 4.5.8 Ensures that Scheduling Clerks for Nursing Service communicate the SVP to nursing staff.
- 4.6 **Direct Care/Direct Service Staff (staff who are entering the client's environment to provide care/service):**
- 4.6.1 Notifies their supervisor by the fastest means possible if the client is not in compliance with this Operational Procedure and/or SVP.
- 4.6.2 Participates in the development and/or review of the SVP as required.
- 4.6.3 Carries out the SVP and provides feedback about the effectiveness of the plan as needed.
- 4.6.4 Notifies supervisor within 24 hours regarding safety issues that arise.
- 4.6.5 Notifies supervisor or the Provincial Health Contact Centre (PHCC) After Hours Services (AHS) immediately if the hazard has the potential to harm oneself or other staff.
- 4.7 **Service Recipient (Client):**
- 4.7.1 Provides accurate information.
- 4.7.2 Alerts and shares pertinent information with the healthcare provider completing the SAFT and SVP where indicated to potential safety issues regarding animal(s)/pet(s) in the home.
- 4.7.3 Participates in the development and implementation of the SVP if one is required.
- 4.7.4 Carries out the SVP.
- 4.7.5 Notifies the service provider(s) of changes that may affect the safety assessment or the SVP.
- 4.8 **Provincial Health Contact Centre (PHCC) - After Hours Service(AHS):**
- 4.8.1 Completes the SAFT as per the above procedure and faxes SAFT along with the report to the relevant office.
- 4.8.2 On occasion, AHS develops a SVP and communicates this plan immediately to all applicable staff.
- 4.8.3 AHS Supervisor collects information and works with the team including the DSS and client to conduct a safety assessment and develop a SVP.
- 4.8.4 For clients known to Home Care: the AHS Supervisor faxes the SVP to the Community Case Coordinator and leaves a phone message.
- 4.8.5 For a client who is not known to Home Care but will be referred to the community area: the AHS Supervisor will send the SAFT and the SVP (where applicable) with the referral and communicate this information to the Team Manager in the relevant Community Area.
- 4.9 **Team Managers:**
- 4.9.1 Ensures all levels of staff are aware of and are fulfilling their responsibilities related to this Operational Procedure. Provides staff with the PHCC AHS phone number.
- 4.9.2 Supports staff in the development of SVPs and reviews safety plans.
- 4.9.3 Works with community area staff and partners to develop SVP for specific areas, e.g. apartment blocks.

- 4.9.4 Monitors RL6 and INM reports and identifies trends to Program or Community Area Director.
 - 4.9.5 Provides on-going education and support.
 - 4.10 **Program Director and Community Area Directors:**
 - 4.10.1 Ensures that Team Managers and staff are compliant with the requirements of this Operational Procedure.
 - 4.11 **Workplace Safety and Health Committees:**
 - 4.11.1 Consult on the development and implementation of this operational procedure.
 - 4.11.2 Reviews and monitors the effectiveness of this operational procedure.
 - 4.11.3 Where required, assist with the identification of hazards and recommend control measures to minimize hazards.
 - 4.12 **Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health (OESH) and Safety and Health Unit (SHU):**
 - 4.12.1 Consults with the facility/site/program on all aspects of this operational procedure.
 - 4.12.2 Assist with recommendations and control measures to minimize hazards.
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5.0 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 All employees must be informed of their rights and responsibilities under the Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation as related to this operational procedure at orientation.
- 5.2 Educational material relating to all hazards (including pets), controls and safe visit plans must be part of orientation for new staff.

In addition, educational material relating to all hazards (including pets), controls and safe visit plans are available to staff in the following formats:

- *paper copies upon request,*
- *electronically on the public website at www.xxx.xxx*

6.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 All hazards must be immediately reported to the immediate supervisor/manager who shall make every effort to resolve safety and health concerns immediately/in a timely manner using the Hazard Elimination and Control Hierarchy as outlined in Definition 2.9 of the [WRHA OESH Operational Procedure Report and Resolution of Safety and Health Concerns](#).
- 6.2 WRHA: In the event of an injury or near miss (not hazard reporting), the immediate supervisor/manager will instruct the reporting employee to call the OESH Injury/Near Miss (INM) Intake Line at 204-940-8482.

Department of Families: The employee will fill the Hazard Concern Report Form to report any unsafe conditions or actions. The employee will fill out the Incident Report Form to report incidents in their workplace.

7.0 REFERENCES

[City of Winnipeg By-Law 92/2013 Responsible Pet Ownership.](#)

City of Winnipeg - Animal Services: <http://www.winnipeg.ca/cms/animal/>

Government of Manitoba (2002): *The Workplace Safety and Health Act – W210*. Winnipeg: Queen’s Printer. www.safemanitoba.com

Government of Manitoba (2006): *The Workplace Safety and Health Regulation – 217/2006*. Winnipeg: Queen’s Printer. www.safemanitoba.com

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority: [Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health Operational Procedure - Working Alone or in Isolation](#) – Community Home/Client Visits, Community/Corporate Health Services and Winnipeg Integrated Services (WIS)

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority: [Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health Operational Procedure – Report and Resolution of Safety and Health Concerns](#)

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority: [WRHA Policy 10.60.010 Access for Person with Service Animals.](#)

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority: Home Care Client Expectation Sheet “Animals – Pets in the Home”