Psychosocial Safety tip sheet

Remote and Isolated work (Psychosocial Hazard #9)

Work that is isolated from the assistance of other people because of the work location, the time of day or the nature of the work. This includes:

- Work at locations where access to resources and communications is difficult.
- Lengthy travel times to get to work.
- Work where there are no or few other people around.
- Situations where workers are required to live away from home for extended periods.

Remote or isolated work can:

Contribute to psychological injury.

May reduce physical safety.

Interacts with other psychosocial hazards.

Are we OK?

Watch out for:

- Employees required to travel frequently and/or for lengthy periods of time.
- Employees working outside of business hours.
- Employees working from home for extended periods of time.
- Situations where employees might be the only person at a work site / office.
- Work in regional or remote areas where telecommunications may not be available or difficult to access.
- Situations where it may be difficult to locate employees (e.g., frequently moving between campuses or around campus).
- Employees who do not interact with other people or members of their team for extended periods.
- Casual, sessional, or contingent workers experiencing uncertainty around contract extensions or renewals.

It looks & sounds like:

- Employees may indicate that they do not feel safe at work.
- Employees may raise concerns around access to technology or communications.
- Employees may be uncontactable.
- You may not know where an employee is.
- There may be extended periods of time where you do not have contact with an employee.
- Employees may indicate that the travel or travel times associated with their work is causing stress or distress at home.

For more info:

- Visit the Safe Work Queensland Website
- Contact the Health & Wellbeing Team via: heathandwellbeing@griffith.edu.au

Tips for building psychosocial safety:

- Establish processes for ensuring that the location of employees is known.
- If employees are traveling to a remote or isolated work site, ensure they tell someone where they are going and when they expect to be back.
- Provide access to communications wherever possible.
- Critically consider the need for and benefits of travel, especially for employees who travel regularly.
- Make use of flexible working and work from home options to provide breaks and time with family to employees with lengthy travel times or frequent travel requirements.
- Ensure that team members come together and interact with each other regularly.
- Ensure you have contact with all team members daily.
- Where employees are working after hours, ensure they can do so safely, that they feel safe while doing so and that there are safe ways to enter and exit the worksite.
- Ensure employees have a way to call for help or signal that they need assistance.