

## **Risk Management Guidelines for NSW Home Library Services**

These guidelines have been developed by the members of the Home Library Service Working Group, a working group of Public Libraries NSW. The guidelines acknowledge that there are a variety of models of home library service delivery, including variations in vehicles, the use of paid staff and volunteers, council policies and practices, client locations, frequency of deliveries and the volume of materials delivered.

These guidelines should be viewed as a guide to developing safe work method statements, policies and practices suited to the local environment. Home Library Service staff should liaise with supervisors, managers, council risk management officers and any other relevant staff when developing policies or procedures based on these guidelines to ensure compliance with local policies.

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Activity	Hazard	Recommended best practice
<b>New members joining the Home Library Service</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must provide permission to enter private property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breach of privacy legislation<sup>1</sup> which sets standards for dealing with personal information</li> <li>Clients with dementia may forget they have given permission to enter private property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include a privacy statement on HLS application forms</li> <li>Include a clause on the membership form for HLS members to give permission to an authorised library representative to enter their premises. E.g.” I....., the owner and/or occupier of..... give permission for any duly authorised Library representative to enter these premises for the purpose of delivering library services.”</li> <li>Store client records appropriately</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must provide emergency contact details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Client may be discovered injured or sick and requiring assistance</li> <li>Emergency contact may be difficult to reach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the emergency contact is aware that the person has joined the library service and that deliveries will be made to the home</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May have to meet eligibility requirements (e.g. doctors certificate )</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carers may not be able to provide a doctors certificate to prove eligibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The HLS policy should provide an entry point for carers who are housebound due to their caring responsibilities</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) [http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/privacynsw/ll\\_pnsw.nsf/pages/PNSW\\_nswprivacy\\_laws](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/privacynsw/ll_pnsw.nsf/pages/PNSW_nswprivacy_laws)

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<b>Risk assessment of delivery locations</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery locations should be assessed for risks in line with council's WH&amp;S requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slip / trip / fall hazards at each delivery site should be assessed</li> <li>• Dog attacks</li> <li>• Parking may be dangerous / difficult at the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a standard check list for assessing sites on the first visit, identifying any issues surrounding parking, dogs, access points, trip hazards etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records should be kept of delivery run details in case of relief drivers or incidents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If an accident / incident occur while completing deliveries management should have access to information about where the staff member is likely to be (route details) and any potential hazards in those locations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep site checklists with information on delivery routes in case of relief drivers or incidents</li> <li>• Text copy of data retrievable in case computer down and digital copy is not available</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify locations where previous incidents involving council staff have occurred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some locations may be addresses that other council officers (e.g. rangers) have encountered difficulties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check if a previous incident register of addresses is maintained by council officers (e.g. rangers).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess locations where it is hazardous for staff or volunteers to enter unaccompanied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some locations may be hazardous for a staff member to attend alone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify locations where it is risky for staff or volunteers to visit unaccompanied</li> <li>• Ensure staff have been trained in personal safety and managing dangerous situations.</li> <li>• Staff conducting deliveries should have a means of contacting the library in case of incident (e.g. mobile phone or two way radio) which should be turned on at all times</li> <li>• Staff on their own should have an isolated worker alarm such as a Duress Alarm that is able to send an emergency signal and track location of worker.</li> </ul>

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<b>Deliveries</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the vehicle selected for deliveries is appropriate for the volume of goods required to be transported</li> <li>• Assess if the vehicle requires modification (e.g. cargo drawer) for safe work practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff or volunteer may be injured conducting deliveries (driving or manual handling)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the vehicle is fitted with any safety features e.g. cargo drawer, safety barrier, mirrors, beeper when reversing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the vehicle is in a safe condition to operate including any modifications required (e.g. cargo drawer).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle breakdown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the vehicle is regularly maintained: implement a check list for any items that should be checked on a regular basis e.g. tyre pressure, fuel, coolant etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise the risk of driving accidents, physical injury or contact with contagious diseases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driving accident resulting in damage to the vehicle.</li> <li>• Adverse weather conditions</li> <li>• Contagious diseases contracted from clients during visits to homes or nursing homes</li> <li>• Staff or volunteers with colds / flu may be contagious and pass infection on to frail clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure drivers have had appropriate training to operate the vehicle safely.</li> <li>• Ensure vehicle selection prioritizes driver safety</li> <li>• Ensure there is easy access to the vehicle for loading and unloading</li> <li>• Staff conducting deliveries should have a means of contacting the library in case of incident [e.g. mobile phone or two way radio] which should be turned on and with the staff member at all times.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate protective clothing is available for adverse weather events e.g. high visibility vests.</li> <li>• Ensure staff and volunteers are alert to the possibility of infection and take appropriate precautions.</li> <li>• Ensure a safe work method statement is implemented for deliveries, manual handling, vehicle use, &amp; infection control.</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers may be using their own vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hazards as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure volunteers have current comprehensive insurance</li> <li>Volunteers to sign in/out of HL workplace and their activity and location be monitored by HL staff.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member may not come to the door</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member may be ill or injured and unable to respond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a follow up procedure is in place e.g. a phone call to the member's emergency contact within a specified timeframe.</li> <li>If no response from the emergency contact, follow up with an appropriate authority: police, department of housing etc.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Staff / Volunteer identification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and volunteers should be able to be clearly identified while making deliveries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff may be challenged by clients or their families/friends when making deliveries</li> <li>• Staff may need to demonstrate they are authorized to enter private property</li> <li>• Clients may make claims that items have been stolen from their homes</li> <li>• Unauthorized visits to clients homes by staff or volunteers may occur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure staff and volunteers have some form of official identification on display while conducting deliveries [e.g. photo identification or name tag] as required by individual libraries.</li> <li>• Ensure volunteers are aware that only trained and authorised volunteers may conduct deliveries [e.g. an untrained friend cannot fill in for them]</li> <li>• Consider providing council uniforms for staff conducting deliveries</li> <li>• Ensure a grievance policy and dispute resolution procedure is in place re: HLS staff or volunteers accused of stealing items from homes or behaving inappropriately with clients.</li> <li>• Ensure information is provided to clients / carers when they join the service with appropriate Council contact information in case they want to make a complaint.</li> <li>• Ensure confidentiality is maintained while complaints are investigated to protect staff in case of unproven or vexatious complaints.</li> </ul>

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<b>Manual Handling</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff or volunteer may be injured conducting deliveries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slip, trip, fall in library loading area or delivery locations</li> <li>Muscle strains or back injury caused by lifting</li> <li>Strains caused by opening / closing vehicle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a safe work method statement is in place</li> <li>Ensure the work area is kept clear of trip hazards</li> <li>Ensure access to the vehicle is clear</li> <li>Ensure staff and volunteers have received manual handling training</li> <li>Ensure suitable trolley's and other aids are available for use</li> <li>Ensure the items are delivered in containers that minimise the risk of overloading</li> <li>Ensure the workstation height, access, egress is appropriate</li> <li>Establish appropriate loan limits and load limits to minimize the risk of injury to staff / volunteers</li> </ul>

Activity	Hazard	Recommended best practice
<b>First aid protocols</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff or volunteers may encounter clients that are sick or injured during the course of making deliveries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff may be injured assisting the client</li> <li>Client may suffer serious injury or death if assistance is not obtained</li> <li>Staff may inadvertently injure client while assisting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure staff and volunteers are aware of appropriate emergency response procedures [i.e. calling ambulance and emergency contact for client]</li> <li>Provide access to first aid training</li> <li>First aid kit located in delivery vehicle</li> <li>Consider inclusion of additional protective equipment depending on LGA, e.g. chemical bag, gloves, sharps kit.</li> </ul>

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<b>Volunteers</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers may visit clients in their homes to make deliveries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers represent themselves as employees of council</li> <li>Volunteers behave inappropriately while conducting library business</li> <li>Volunteer may be injured conducting deliveries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure appropriate screening processes are in place for volunteer recruitment</li> <li>Ensure a code of conduct and dress code is provided for all volunteers</li> <li>Ensure appropriate training and mentoring is provided for volunteers</li> <li>Ensure any complaints about volunteers are followed up promptly</li> <li>Ensure any insurance issue regarding volunteers using their own vehicles is addressed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers selecting items in the library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers may be injured manual handling books in the library [e.g. while selecting items]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure any insurance and WH&amp;S issues regarding volunteers using council vehicles and have been addressed.</li> <li>Ensure volunteers are aware of lines of reporting and procedures in case of grievances</li> </ul>



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<p><b>Difficult / distressed clients</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many housebound clients can experience variations in their behaviour due to illness, degenerative conditions, medication, isolation and loneliness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff /volunteers may encounter a client who is disorientated</li> <li>Staff / volunteers may be assaulted verbally or physically by a client or member of the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure staff and volunteers have received basic training in appropriate responses when they encounter disorientated / difficult clients</li> <li>Ensure staff and volunteers are aware of any clients identified as being difficult due to known conditions [e.g.dementia]</li> <li>Ensure incidents are reported to the supervisor and recorded. Where appropriate the emergency contact may need to be notified</li> <li>Carry mobile phone or other device e.g. Duress Alarm to enable immediate call for assistance if required</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deceased clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff / volunteers may encounter a client who is deceased when they call in to deliver items</li> <li>Staff / volunteers may be affected emotionally by the impact or encountering a deceased client or losing a long term client</li> <li>Library materials may be lost when clients effects are dispersed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure staff and volunteers have received training in appropriate responses when they encounter deceased clients [i.e. contacting the police, ambulance, informing the library manager or OIC]</li> <li>Ensure staff and volunteers who have been affected are appropriately debriefed by library management / council HR and have access to the employee assistance program if further counselling is required</li> <li>Ensure a policy is in place re: HLS staff attending funerals for clients</li> <li>Ensure a policy is in place re: writing off items that are lost when clients are deceased / moved into alternative accommodation.</li> </ul>

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<b>Lending electrical equipment</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Libraries may loan CD players or other equipment to clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WorkCover requires that some electrical equipment be regularly tested and tagged.</li> <li>Equipment may be damaged during use by the client.</li> <li>Equipment may be hazardous if its condition deteriorates.</li> <li>Items belonging to the client may be damaged by library equipment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor any developments in the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Electrical Equipment) Regulation 2006 which specifically identifies working environments where testing and tagging of electrical equipment is required. For further information contact <a href="http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au">www.workcover.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>Ensure asset management procedures are in place to manage, delete and replace equipment as required.</li> <li>Inspect equipment regularly to identify deterioration.</li> </ul>

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<b>Lending digital devices</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Libraries may loan e readers, iPad, tablets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk of theft or damage</li> <li>Equipment may be hazardous is not used in accordance with manufacturers recommendations e.g. incorrect power cords, equipment in use while connected to power.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure processes are in place to manage and track loan of digital devices</li> <li>Library digital device loan policy which covers, loan agreement, conditions of use and code of conduct.</li> </ul>