



# Residential Care: Passive night shift Procedure

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## 1. Purpose

To outline the roles and responsibilities of Department for Child Protection (DCP) Residential Care staff and agency staff working within DCP Residential Care undertaking passive night shifts.

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all DCP staff working in DCP Residential Care. Throughout this document, the term 'residential care staff' is inclusive of DCP residential care staff and agency staff contracted by the department to work in DCP Residential Care houses.

## 3. Authority

### 3.1 Legislative context

- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)
  - Safety of children and young people is paramount – Section 7
  - Organisations must have policies and procedures to ensure safe environments are provided- section 114
- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Regulations 2017](#)
  - Providing safe environments for children and young people- Regulation 35
- [Family and Community Services Regulations 2024](#)
  - Management of residential care facilities- Part 2, section 4

### 3.2 Whole of Government requirements

Not Applicable.

### 3.3 DCP requirements

- [WHSIM Fatigue management Procedure](#)

### 3.4 Principles

- The safety of children and young people is the paramount consideration.

## 4. Procedure requirements

To ensure the department has capacity to maintain business continuity while managing workforce operational needs, residential care managers and/or supervisors will assess a DCP residential care house's passive capability and suitability for passive night shifts.



A passive shift is an inactive night shift, where a residential care worker can sleep/rest while on shift when the house is settled, and it is deemed safe and appropriate to do so. During passive shifts, the residential care worker:

- is not required to undertake duties but must remain at the placement
- must immediately attend to the needs of the children and young people when the child or young person wakes
- must not return to passive shift until the child or young person is asleep and settled in bed.

#### 4.1 Initial suitability assessment

Placements are assessed into the following two categories:

- Active: requires active shift coverage throughout the scheduled night shift.
- Passive capable: night shift can be covered as an inactive shift when assessed as safe and appropriate to do so.

The residential care manager and/or supervisor are responsible for:

- identifying passive capable DCP houses
- completing an initial assessment to determine if a house is suitable for passive shift
- ensuring that the property has adequate staff sleeping quarters.

The residential care manager and/or supervisor should review passive capable assessed houses every four weeks to ensure that passive shifts continue to be appropriate.

Managers and supervisors must ensure affected residential care teams, the Compliance and Operations team [DCPRCCComplianceandOperations@sa.gov.au](mailto:DCPRCCComplianceandOperations@sa.gov.au), case management, and Placement Services Unit (PSU) [DCPResidentialCareAdmissionandDischarge@sa.gov.au](mailto:DCPResidentialCareAdmissionandDischarge@sa.gov.au) are informed of any change in the passive shift status of a house.

If the property is deemed passive capable, residential care managers, supervisors and/or senior youth workers must assess the needs of the children and young people who reside in the house. This assessment describes the degree to which the children and young people at the house may be vulnerable without active night shift monitoring.

In completing the assessment, consideration must be given to the individual needs and circumstances of the children and young people residing in the house. Factors to consider include (but not limited to):

- trauma history
- age and developmental ability
- physical health
- mental health
- harmful sexual behaviour
- whether the child or young person is frequently missing or absent
- night-time behaviours (for example, sleepwalking, nocturnal enuresis)
- substance misuse
- self-harming/suicidal behaviours.

When a house is approved for passive duty, the residential care manager and/or supervisor must inform:

- relevant residential care teams
- the operations and compliance team
- the child or young person's DCP case worker
- PSU (email via [DCPResidentialCareAdmissionandDischarge@sa.gov.au](mailto:DCPResidentialCareAdmissionandDischarge@sa.gov.au)).



PSU are responsible for maintaining and updating their records of passive capable houses.

Senior child and youth workers are responsible for:

- informing children and young people if their house will have a passive shift
- providing children and young people with clear instructions about how they can wake up the residential care worker on passive shift if they need assistance during the night.

## 4.2 Secondary assessment upon arrival of night shift

The residential care worker rostered for night shift must undertake a secondary assessment when commencing their shift to determine if passive duty remains appropriate. This assessment is required due to the dynamic nature of residential care and the critical and changing needs of children and young people.

When undertaking the assessment, the staff member must consider:

- handover information provided by staff on PM shift about the events of the day and the previous night shift
- any night routines (for example, toileting needs)
- sleep disturbances (for example, children and young people experiencing nightmares)
- how familiar the residential care worker is with the house and the children and young people
- any concerns the residential care worker may have about undertaking passive duty
- current information about children and young people at the house, such as, but not limited to:
  - physical and mental health
  - harmful sexual behaviour
  - alcohol and other drug use
  - self-harming/suicidal behaviours
  - children and young people who are missing or absent.

This assessment will determine whether there is a need to remain active to perform duties during the night shift or if passive duty is safe and appropriate.

The residential care worker must record the outcome of their assessment in the E-log and then update the mobile night team and/or Senior Night Officer (SNO).

Residential care workers must contact the mobile night team and/or senior night officer if assistance is required in assessing whether an active or passive shift is appropriate.

## 4.3 Responsibilities of staff undertaking passive night shifts

If the residential care worker assesses that passive duty is appropriate, they must undertake the following actions:

- be prepared that the night shift may require active duties including personal fatigue management needs
- ensure the house mobile phone (with volume on) and duress alarm are kept with the residential care worker in readiness for activation, if required
- alert the residential care 'check in' house for their area that they will be going passive
- ensure the security of their resting location
- wear appropriate sleep attire and have appropriate footwear available if required to become active
- ensure that the children and young people are aware of the passive shift conditions, including arrangements for waking the residential care worker when assistance is needed



- immediately return to active duty if a child or young person wakes, and only return to passive duty when the child or young person is asleep and settled for the night
- return to active duty prior to the next shift arriving
- complete all logging, including passive and active hours worked, and other duties as per the house schedule
- ensure the DCP supplied staff bedding (including pillowcases, sheets etc) are washed and changed at the conclusion of each night shift in readiness for the next shift. Alternatively, residential care workers have the option of bringing their own bedding (such as a sleeping bag or linen).

## 5. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

This procedure will be reviewed and updated in line with DCP policy review cycle or as required.

## 6. Related documents

| Related documents, forms and templates                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • <a href="#">Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017</a>         |
| • <a href="#">Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017</a> |
| • <a href="#">Family and Community Services Regulations 2024</a>      |
| • <a href="#">WHSIM Fatigue management Procedure</a>                  |

## Document control

| Reference No./ File No.                         |                                             |             |               |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
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| <a href="#">Risk Assessment Matrix</a>          | Moderate                                    | Possible    | Medium        |

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| April 2022       | 1.1     | Desktop review completed and review date extended                                                                                     |
| 7 March 2025     | 2.0     | Updated as part of the policy review cycle. Omission of all covid references. Procedure and links updated following OOHC consultation |