WHS DOCUMENTS & TEMPLATES

DOC-RTD-TPL · Right to Disconnect and After-Hours Contact Policy

Product Overview

For: Any employer, of any size, that wants clear, fair rules for contacting workers outside their working hours

Version 1.0 · 22 November 2026

Set clear rules for contact outside working hours: when it is reasonable, emergencies, on-call and availability, how to contact people, and managing the psychosocial risk of an always-on culture, with an arrangement you agree for each role that needs one.

The policy covers its purpose and scope, the right to disconnect (with Australia as the worked example), when contact outside working hours is usually reasonable and when it is not, emergencies, on-call and availability, how to contact people, what managers and workers do, psychosocial risk, raising a concern, and records and review.

The After-Hours Contact Arrangement records, for a role or a person, the working hours, the situations where contact outside them is agreed, how and when contact is made, how on-call time is paid or compensated, and the rest that follows. Both are in Word, with PDF copies.

Written to work in any country, with Australian law as the worked example. The guide says what to check where you work. In Australia, its state and territory notes show where the law differs, including the regulator to contact. Made by Orana Skills Centre.

What is included

Item	File
Right to disconnect and after-hours contact policy: the right to disconnect, when contact is reasonable, emergencies, on-call, how to contact people, roles, psychosocial risk, concerns and review	02_TEMPLATE/Right to Disconnect and After-Hours Contact Policy.docx and .pdf
After-hours contact arrangement for a role or person: hours, agreed situations, how and when, pay for availability, rest	02_TEMPLATE/After-Hours Contact Arrangement.docx and .pdf
How to Use This Template: how to complete and adapt it, the law in brief with Australia as the worked example, records and every placeholder	01_START_HERE/How to Use This Template.pdf
Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms and Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (PDF)

Who it is for

- Small and medium businesses writing their first right to disconnect policy
- HR, people and culture, and WHS advisers

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SAMPLE · Right to Disconnect and After-Hours Contact Policy · Buy the full editable version:
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How to Use This Template

How to complete, adapt and keep the right to disconnect and after-hours contact policy

1 What this template is for

Being able to switch off from work protects people's health. Contact outside working hours that is constant, unplanned or unpaid can become a psychosocial hazard, and in Australia it can also be a workplace relations matter. This policy sets clear, fair rules, keeps contact for the times it is genuinely needed, and gives roles that need out-of-hours contact an agreed arrangement.

2 How to use it

Step	What to do
1	Name the person who owns after-hours contact, and fill in the placeholders.
2	Check the law where you work, and any award, agreement or contract terms about working hours, on-call and availability.
3	List the roles that genuinely need contact outside working hours, and agree an After-Hours Contact Arrangement for each.
4	Talk the policy through with your workers and their representatives, and adapt it.
5	Have the chief executive or owner approve it, and brief managers: they set the culture.
6	Look at after-hours contact patterns, workloads and concerns, and act on what you find.
7	Review the policy every year.

3 Who does what

Who	What they do
After-hours contact owner	Keeps arrangements and rosters, reviews patterns, keeps the policy current
Managers	Plan work within hours, agree arrangements, never criticise for not responding
Workers	Follow their arrangement, raise concerns, respect colleagues' time off
Chief executive or owner	Approves the policy and models it

4 The law, in brief

Health and safety laws differ by country and, in some countries, by state or province. Check the law, regulator and codes or guidance that apply where you work. Some industries, such as mining, have extra laws. Section 5 shows how the law works in Australia, as the worked example. Elsewhere, start with your health and safety regulator's website.

5 The law in Australia (the worked example)

Health and safety laws require a business to manage psychosocial risks, such as high job demands, long hours and not being able to recover, so far as is reasonably practicable. Employment laws, awards and agreements also set working hours and pay for on-call and availability.

In Australia, employees have a right to disconnect: to refuse to monitor, read or respond to contact from their employer, and about their work from others, outside their working hours, unless the refusal is unreasonable. What is

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Right to Disconnect and After-Hours Contact Policy

When we contact people outside their working hours, when we do not, and how everyone gets time to rest and recover

1 Purpose

Phones, email and messaging make it easy for work to follow people home. Time away from work to rest, recover and be with family and friends protects health and safety, and helps people do their best work. **[Company name]** respects workers' time outside their working hours. This policy sets out when contact outside working hours is reasonable, how emergencies and on-call work are handled, and what everyone can expect.

2 Scope

This policy applies to everyone who works for us, including managers, employees, casual and part-time workers and, as far as it can, contractors and labour hire workers. It covers contact by phone, text, email, messaging apps, collaboration tools and social media, from us, our managers and colleagues, and, about work, from clients, customers and suppliers.

3 The right to disconnect

Workers do not have to monitor, read or respond to work contact outside their working hours, unless refusing would be unreasonable in the circumstances, or they are rostered on call or paid to be available, as section 6 says. Nobody is disadvantaged, criticised or treated unfairly for not responding outside their working hours.

In Australia (the worked example)

- In Australia, employees have a right to disconnect: they may refuse to monitor, read or respond to contact, or attempted contact, from their employer outside their working hours, and from others such as clients if it is about their work, unless the refusal is unreasonable.
- Whether a refusal is unreasonable depends on all the circumstances, including the reason for the contact, how it is made and how disruptive it is, whether the employee is paid to be available or for working extra hours, their role and level of responsibility, and their personal circumstances, including family or caring responsibilities.
- Check the Fair Work Ombudsman's current information, and any award or agreement, before relying on these details. Elsewhere, check the law where you work.

4 When contact outside working hours is reasonable

Usually reasonable	Usually not reasonable
A genuine emergency or a risk to someone's health or safety	Routine questions, updates or requests that can wait until the next working day
Contact the person has agreed to, such as an on-call roster or a role paid to be available	Expecting an answer from someone who is not on call or paid to be available
A shift change or a cancellation the person needs to know about before their next shift	Repeated messages, or contact late at night, without good reason
A time-critical matter in the person's role, as their agreement or arrangement sets out	Copying people into group chats and email threads after hours by default

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YOUR LOGO
Right-click > Change Picture

[Company name]

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After-Hours Contact Arrangement

Agreed for a role or a person whose work needs some contact outside working hours. Reviewed when the role or the person's circumstances change

Role		**Person (if agreed for one person)**	
Manager		**Agreed on**	
Next review date			

1 Working hours

Usual working hours and days	
Time zone, if different from the manager's	

The rest of this page, and the rest of this document, are in the full product.

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Right to Disconnect and After-Hours Contact Policy

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

This sample shows a few pages, so you can judge the layout and the quality. Set clear rules for contact outside working hours: when it is reasonable, emergencies, on-call and availability, how to contact people, and managing the psychosocial risk of an always-on culture, with an arrangement you agree for each role that needs one.

What the full product contains

- **Right to disconnect and after-hours contact policy: the right to disconnect, when contact is reasonable, emergencies, on-call, how to contact people, roles, psychosocial risk, concerns and review**
  02_TEMPLATE/Right to Disconnect and After-Hours Contact Policy.docx and .pdf
- **After-hours contact arrangement for a role or person: hours, agreed situations, how and when, pay for availability, rest**
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  01_START_HERE/How to Use This Template.pdf
- **Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms and Version Information**
  01_START_HERE/ (PDF)

Formats

- Word (.docx), editable, with your logo and business name in the header
- PDF copies of the Word documents, for printing blank
- Delivered as a single ZIP download

Get the full editable documents

https://training.oranaskillscentre.com/documents/right-to-disconnect-and-after-hours-contact-policy

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