



Child Protection Policy

BACKGROUND

Safe Network is required to have a Child Protection Policy by s.14; *Vulnerable Children Act 2014* (VCA14).

This Policy is to be provided to the chief executives of prescribed State services, as per s.16; VCA14.

This Policy is to be made available on Safe Network's website (www.safenetwork.org.nz), as per s.16(a)(ii); VCA14.

POSITION STATEMENT

Safe Network acknowledges that the welfare and safety of children is an important consideration, which may in certain circumstances override other considerations including the client's right to privacy.

Safe Network will take prompt action in the event that it becomes aware of current harm or risk of current harm to children, including risk of harm to self or others.

Safe Network will have in place appropriate safety checking for all people employed or engaged in work that involves contact with children.

NOTIFICATIONS OF CONCERN

Concerns for the safety of a child or young person may arise in the course of assessment and intervention at Safe Network, which require Safe Network to pass these to the Ministry for Vulnerable Children / Oranga Tamariki (MVCOT), whether or not the consent of the Safe Network client to do so has been obtained, in accordance with s.15; *Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989*.

These concerns may include, but are not limited to:

1. A Safe Network client disclosing that he/she has sexually or physically abused a child or young person, and presents a current risk to a child or young person;

2. A Safe Network client who is a child or young person disclosing that he/she has been sexually or physically abused;
3. A Safe Network client disclosing that he/she is at risk of harming a child or young person, including sexually;
4. A Safe Network client disclosing that a third party is at risk of harming a child or young person, including sexually;
5. A Safe Network client disclosing that he/she is at risk of taking his/her own life or inflicting serious self-harm;
6. A Safe Network client disclosing that his/her living situation includes a child or young person, and for whom there is no approved safety plan.

In cases where such concerns are being reported, Safe Network will apply the following process:

1. The Safe Network clinician will confirm their reasons for such disclosure with a Safe Network manager prior to the information being forwarded.
2. Safe Network will have due regard to the *Privacy Act 1993* and the *Health Information Privacy Code 1994*.
3. Ideally, Safe Network will inform the client that these concerns are being reported, and the client will be given the opportunity to pass this information on themselves. However, Safe Network may report without client knowledge or consent for reasons of practicality or safety.
4. Where the risk is immediate, Safe Network will report the information as soon as practicably possible.
5. Safe Network will maintain a record of information passed, including the name of the client concerned, the information provided, and the agency and contact person to whom it was reported.

Wherever possible, reporting to statutory agencies shall be made in writing. Where concerns are reported to MVCOT, Safe Network will use the Department's standard "Report of Concern to Child, Youth and Family" form.

WORKER SAFETY CHECKING

New Employees and Contractors

All new employees and contractors of Safe Network will be required to complete a Ministry of Justice "Request for Criminal Conviction History - Third Party" form, as a standard part of their application for employment or engagement. As per s. 31; VCA14, Safe Network will ensure that the checking process includes:

- Confirmation of Identity
- Consideration of any specific information required to be considered by s.32; VCA14

- An assessment of the risk the applicant would pose to the safety of children or young persons if employed or engaged.

All offers of employment or engagement shall be contingent on the applicant having no record of offences that may indicate a risk to children or young people. In the event of such a record being received from the Ministry of Justice, Safe Network will immediately withdraw the offer of employment or engagement, or terminate employment/engagement where this has commenced.

New contractors do not need to complete a Ministry of Justice “Request for Criminal Conviction History – Third Party” form if they have previously been engaged by Safe Network and have completed and returned this form to the satisfaction of Safe Network within the previous 12 months.

Existing Employees and Contractors

All existing employees and contractors of Safe Network will be required to complete a Ministry of Justice “Request for Criminal Conviction History – Third Party” form annually, or at such intervals as may be required by Safe Network, provided that the interval is not greater than 3 years since that employee’s/contractor’s previous safety check. As per s. 31; VCA14, Safe Network will ensure that the checking process includes:

- Confirmation of Identity
- Consideration of any specific information required to be considered by s.32; VCA14
- An assessment of the risk the applicant would pose to the safety of children or young persons if employed or engaged.

Existing employees whose safety checks raise concerns that Safe Network believe would pose unacceptable risk to the safety of children or young persons, will be deemed to be in serious breach of their employment agreement, which would result in termination of employment.

Existing contractors whose safety checks raise concerns that Safe Network believe would pose unacceptable risk to the safety of children or young persons, will have their contracts of engagement terminated.

Approved by the Board of Safe Network Incorporated on 25 September 2017.