

August 2026

Remote and isolated work

What happened?

A possum trapper with over 50 years' experience rolled his quad bike down a steep gully in a remote part of the country and was left with seven broken ribs, torn muscles in his back, and a badly damaged shoulder. He credits his survival to crush protection devices, wearing a helmet and carrying a personal locator beacon.

This man made it through – but sadly many workers who are injured in remote locations are not so lucky.

What's the risk?

Remote or isolated work occurs when a worker performs tasks without direct assistance from others due to location, timing, or the nature of the work.

- Farmers working alone in remote locations.
- Construction workers working late after others have left the site.
- Maintenance staff carrying out urgent repairs when premises are closed.
- Teams working in restricted-access basements or plant rooms.
- Roadside workers operating in areas with limited mobile coverage.
- Forestry workers in remote locations.
- Care workers conducting solo home visits.
- Petrol station attendants working alone on night shift.

In any of these cases, delays in receiving assistance can increase the severity of accidents, emergencies, or threats of physical violence.

What you need to do

Before remote or isolated work begins

Ask the following questions:

- Can the work be avoided or completed another way?
- Is the task suitable for a lone worker?
- Is the worker competent, trained, and authorised to work unsupervised?
- Can a buddy system be used – working with someone else instead of alone?
- What support systems are available, such as:
 - radios, satellite phones, emergency alarms, personal locator beacons
 - first aid equipment
 - scheduled welfare checks
 - emergency response procedures.

Workers undertaking remote or isolated work should:

- work with someone else where possible
- make sure they tell someone where they're going and when they expect to be back
- receive training in emergency and disaster response procedures
- carry suitable first aid supplies
- carry reliable communication devices suitable for the location
- have a secondary method of raising an alarm
- be monitored remotely where appropriate (for example, CCTV or electronic monitoring systems).

Think safe. Stay connected. Never assume help is nearby.