



# Inpatient AWOL Procedure

Procedure Number

WCDHB-MHS-0033

Version Nos:

4

## 1. Purpose

This Procedure is performed as a means of providing direction and guidance to West Coast District Health Board (WCDHB) Mental Health Service (MHS) staff when patients are absent without leave (AWOL) from the Inpatient Unit or do not return from an approved period of leave.

## 2. Application

This Procedure is to be followed by all WCDHB MHS staff.

## 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Procedure:

**Leave** is taken to mean a process whereby a consumer who is an inpatient under an inpatient order, is allowed to leave the Inpatient Unit for a period of time, as determined by a Psychiatrist.

**Absent Without Leave (AWOL)** is taken to mean a situation where an inpatient leaves the Inpatient Unit without permission from a clinical staff member, or where a patient fails to return to the Inpatient unit at the completion of an approved period of leave.

## 4. Responsibilities

For the purposes of this Procedure:

**WCDHB MHS staff** will:

- ensure the patient is AWOL before notifying relevant persons;
- notify on-duty Psychiatrist, Tact Team and Police (only for at-risk patients)
- complete a WCDHB MHS Inpatient AWOL Form and a WCDHB Accident/Incident Form.
- make a search of the immediate area
- notify the patient's family/whanau/care giver
- contact patient's last known address
- make arrangements for the return of the patient

## 5. Resources Required

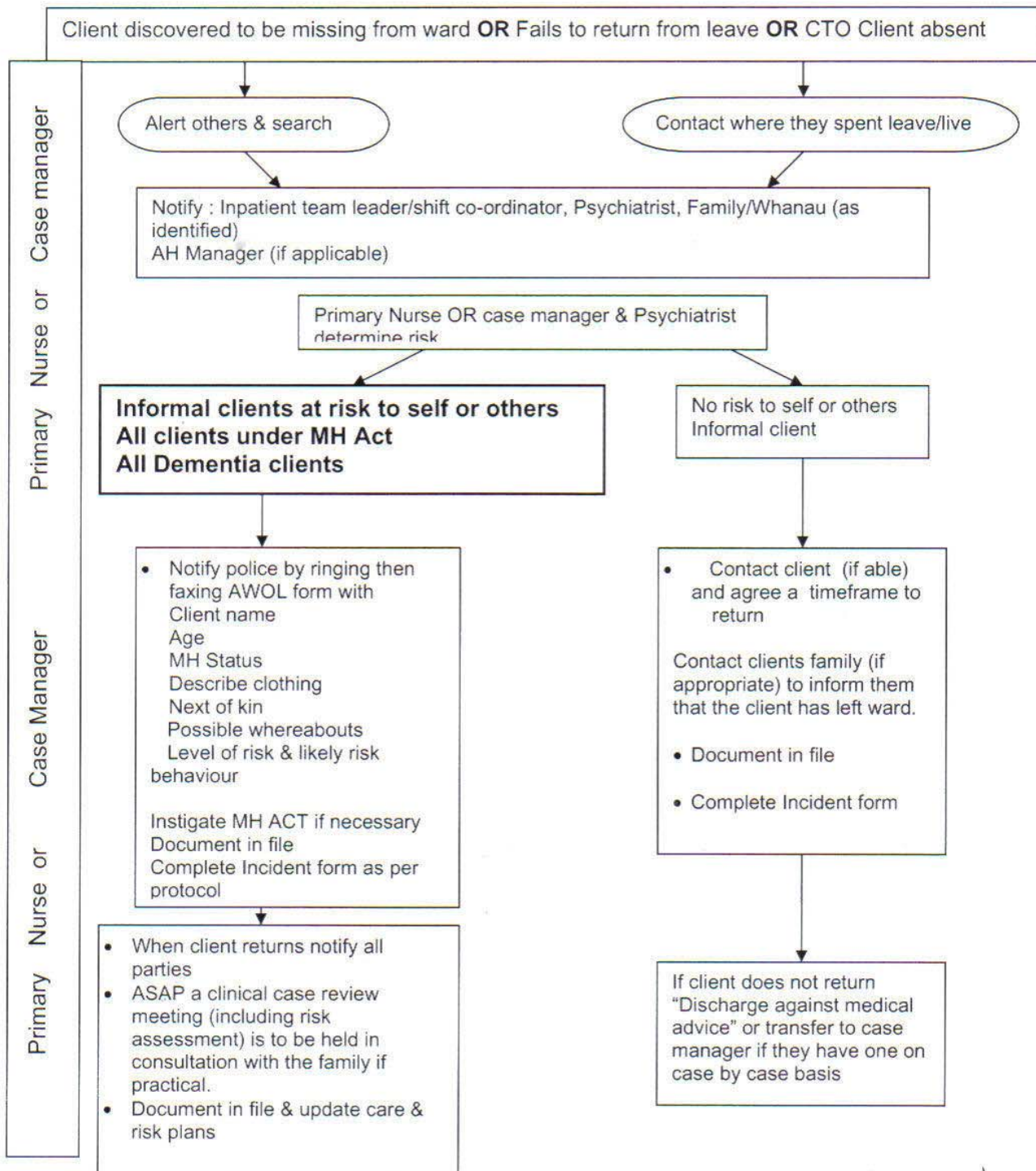
This Procedure requires:

- i) Patient's medical record
- ii) WCDHB MHS AWOL Form
- iii) WCDHB Accident/Incident Form



## 6. Process

This procedure applies to all inpatients and to Community clients under CTO who are absent from their designated place of treatment





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### 7. Precautions And Considerations

- ➔ Staff are to complete a WCDHB MHS Inpatient AWOL Form and a WCDHB Accident/Incident Form.
- ➔ Consideration should be given to notifying any potential victim of the AWOL patient
- ➔ The return of the AWOL patient is the responsibility of WCDHB MHS.

### 8. References

Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act (1992) and Amendments  
Health & Disability Sector Standards NZS 8134:2008

### 9. Related Documents

WCDHB MHS Inpatient AWOL Form

WCDHB Accident/Incident Form

<b>Revision History</b>	<b>Version:</b>	4
	<b>Developed By:</b>	1#CF Project Team
	<b>Authorised By:</b>	General Manager – Mental Health
	<b>Date Authorised:</b>	January 2003
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