

# Environmental Restrictions

## Background

This Fact Sheet provides practitioners, service providers and disability support workers with information about the authorisation and use of environmental restrictions as applied to those who have a disability as defined in the Disability Services Act (2011).

The reduction and even elimination of the use of restrictive practices is the ideal. Regardless of the intent of the use of restriction, there is significant evidence to demonstrate the inappropriate use of restrictive practices can lead to physical and psychological injuries and longer term implications (Australian Psychological Society, 2011).

## Definition of an environmental restriction

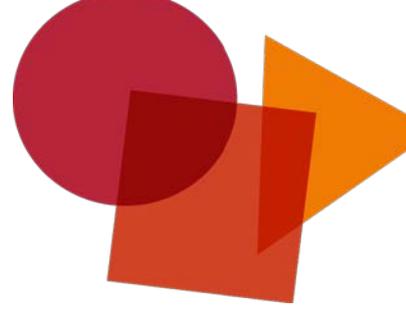
Under Section 34 of the Disability Services Act (2011) –‘Environmental restriction, in relation to a person with disability, means a restrictive intervention in relation to the person that consists of the modification of an object, or the environment of the person, so as to enable the behavioural control of the person but does not include a personal restriction’.

A restrictive intervention does not include an action that is taken for therapeutic purposes or enables safe transportation. Further information on this can be found in the fact sheets ‘Restrictive interventions not requiring authorisation’ and ‘Use of Restrictive Interventions and defining ‘therapeutic’

Essentially, lack of free access to all parts of a person's environment is defined as an environmental restriction.

Other examples may include but are not limited to:

- restricted access to valued items or activities as a method to control behaviour
- increasing supervision as a means of controlling behaviour or managing risk
- locking cupboards, fridges, barriers preventing access to kitchen, locking access to food items



## Can environmental restrictions ever be considered?

Attention may be given for the use of an environmental restriction for use by a disability service provider or funded private person under the following considerations:

- that it is in the best interests of the person with disability
- the consequences to the person with disability if a restrictive intervention of that type is carried out
- any alternative methods reasonably suitable and able to be used
- the nature and degree of risk if the intervention is carried out
- whether the use of the intervention will promote or reduce the safety, health and well-being of the person with disability
- as part of a positive behaviour support plan that promotes positive outcomes for the adult and supports the reduction or elimination of restrictive practices.

## Who can authorise the use of environmental restrictions?

Under the *Disability Services Act (2011)* approval for the use of an environmental restriction may be granted under certain conditions. Approval for the use of an environmental restriction is obtained from the Secretary of the Department of Communities Tasmania, following a recommendation from the Senior Practitioner. The approval period is 90 days and may be subject to a number of conditions.

## Who can authorise the use of restricting access to food?

Restricting access to food in an environmental restriction under the *Disability Services Act (2011)*. Approval for the use of an environmental restriction is obtained from the Secretary, following a recommendation from the Senior Practitioner. The approval period is 90 days and may be subject to a number of conditions.

## Further Information?

Further information, please refer to the following policies, procedures and fact sheets :

- [Disability Services Act 2011](#)
- 'Restrictive Interventions in Services for People with Disability' Guidelines (DCS, 2014)
- 'Locking of Fridges and Pantries' Fact Sheet
- 'Restrictive interventions not requiring authorisation' Fact Sheet
- [Australian Psychological Society \(2011\). Evidence-based guidelines to reduce the need for restrictive practices in the disability sector.](#)



## How do I contact the Tasmanian Senior Practitioner?

The Senior Practitioner is available to discuss any issues or concerns relating to the use or potential use of a personal restriction on the contact details listed below.

Applications for approval to use an environmental restriction can only be written by a disability service provider or a funded private person and can be sent to the email address listed below.

Telephone: (03) 6166 3567    Mobile: 0428 197 474

Email: [seniorpractitionerdisability@communities.tas.gov.au](mailto:seniorpractitionerdisability@communities.tas.gov.au)

Web: [www.communities.tas.gov.au/disability/office-of-the-senior-practitioner](http://www.communities.tas.gov.au/disability/office-of-the-senior-practitioner)

Further information about Restrictive Interventions can be found on the Riset Tas link below.



**Access practice resources and restrictive intervention information via Riset-TAS online: [Riset-Tas Link](#)**

*Please note: The information contained in this document is provided as an initial guide only. It is not intended to be and is not a substitute for legal advice. Service providers should seek their own independent legal advice with reference to the implementation of the legislation.*