

Risk Assessment Naturally Native Project Volunteers

Most accidents can be avoided by identifying the hazards present, assessing the associated risks and taking appropriate action to reduce risk to an acceptable level. This document sets out how to assess risk in order to ensure a safe working environment.

Terminology

- Risk Assessment - An assessment of the hazards and risks associated with an activity, workplace or system of work that can be reasonably foreseen. The identification and implementation of safety precautions to reduce those risks if possible.
- Hazard - Something with potential to cause harm (injury, ill health) to people. Hazards can either be created by a work process (such as tree felling or moving furniture) or can be inherent in the site (e.g. a river or stair case).
- Risk - The likelihood that a hazard will actually result in harm, the severity of that harm and the number of people affected.
- Control Measures - These are the steps we need to put in place to reduce risk.

Risk Level

Risk level can be calculated by using the table below. The higher the level of risk the greater the potential for harm and the greater the need to reduce it. When considering a task or activity estimate the risk level for each hazard by assessing the probability of harm occurring, and the severity of the result.

Probability		Severity		Risk Level
1 Improbable		1 No harm		1-5 = Low
2 Infrequent		2 Minor injury to one or more persons		
3 Occasional	*	3 Major injury to one or more persons	=	6-10 = Medium
4 Common		4 Death to one person		
5 Certain		5 Death to several people		11-25 = High

If the calculated risk level for any hazard associated with a planned activity is higher than 5 control measures are required and the risk level should then be recalculated. If the risk level cannot be reduced to 5 or below after control measures are in place the activity cannot proceed.

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Emergency Information 999 or 112	Nearest Hospital/Tel – Nearest Grid ref and/or post code for emergency access -
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Date:					Location:							
Task/Activity		Weather Conditions					Names of Employees Involved:					
Weather Conditions		Wind Speed	Temp	Sun	Ice	Snow	Rain	Naturally Native Volunteers:				
								PPE:				
								Tools:				
Hazard	Likelihood	Severity (1 to 5)	Risk Level	Control Measures Required				Likelihood	Severity (1 to 5)	Risk Level		
Lone Working & subsequent lack of assistance	3	4	12	<p>Avoid lone working if possible. If unavoidable, you must make a local buddy or staff member aware of the location you will be surveying and stay in touch with them on arrival and departure from the site.</p> <p>Carry a charged mobile phone, a map/GPS, a torch, a whistle and a watch whenever you are lone working outside.</p> <p>Take precautions against risk situations.</p>				2	2	4		

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Slips, Trips and Falls	3	2	6	<p>Ensure safe, accessible route established before beginning a survey.</p> <p>All volunteers and staff to wear appropriate footwear e.g. walking boots with ankle support.</p> <p>Continuously assess survey route during survey. Avoid eroding or steep banksides. Proceed slowly across uneven, slippery or steep ground, testing footing as you progress. Be aware of exposed roots, rabbit holes and bramble as a trip hazard.</p> <p>Take extra care when working in wet and slippery conditions.</p>	2	2	4
Cuts and Abrasions and eye injuries	3	2	6	<p>Be aware of low hanging branches and thorny vegetation along survey route.</p>	2	2	4

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Becoming disorientated/lost	3	2	6	<p>Retrace your steps</p> <p>Plan route beforehand/Identify key landmarks/put out markers during daytime recce</p> <p>Buddy system: Notify someone of destination (grid reference) and expected time back/agree contingency procedure</p> <p>Bring a fully charged mobile phone (use Map app and GPS if available to check location or phone for help)</p>	1	1	1
Exposure, illness due to extreme weather – hypothermia/heat stroke/sun burn etc.	2	3	6	<p>Ensure all volunteers and staff are dressed appropriately for weather conditions, including hats and sunscreen. Stop the survey in event of extreme weather.</p> <p>Carry plenty of water and food.</p> <p>Keep breaks short and keep people active to avoid them getting too cold. Finish task early if people are getting cold.</p> <p>Carry a towel and/or dry clothing in case of accidental immersion.</p>	2	2	4

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Heavy rainfall, snow melt causing increased water levels	3	3	9	<p>Monitor weather prior to commencing survey to be aware of potential increased water levels or flooding incidents. Ensure appropriate footwear to prevent slipping when accessing banks. Monitor conditions using the following websites:</p> <p>Flood warnings for England - GOV.UK (flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>River level information for Moors Burn at Houghton Le Spring - GOV.UK (flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk)</p>	3	1	3
Working near water – rivers, streams, ponds/scrapes – risk of drowning	4	5	20	<p>When surveying for water voles, you may want to do so from within the watercourse. Chose a safe entry point and do not enter water higher than the top of wellies. If the water is considered to be fast-flowing, do not enter. Move on to the next section.</p> <p>Survey any deep sections from the bank.</p> <p>Do not lean over water to see under overhanging vegetation but lie on the bank on your stomach so that your weight stays on the bank.</p>	1	4	4
Water causing infection – leptospirosis/Weil's disease	3	4	12	<p>Ensure all open wounds covered up and avoid ingesting water. Antibacterial gel used after handling equipment. All staff familiar with symptoms relevant to Leptospirosis: Leptospirosis (Weil's disease) - NHS (www.nhs.uk) and alerting GP of potential infections.</p>	1	4	4

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Exposure to toxic water	2	4	8	If toxic blooms or polluted water is suspected (dead animals or livestock, chemical odour etc) do not enter or touch the water and report it to the Environment Agency as soon as possible.	1	3	3
Injury from animals – wild and domestic Lyme disease from tick bites Bird Flu	2	3	6	Beware of loose dogs off the lead. Ensure all volunteers and staff are aware not to approach or touch dogs when on or off the lead. Avoid livestock. Wear appropriate clothing in long grass such as long sleeves and long trousers tucked into socks. Avoid contact with dead or dying birds. Alert member of staff.	2	2	4
Sickness or injury in remote location	2	4	8	No volunteers should attempt to carry out a task alone and should take another volunteer or 'buddy' to sites. Check phone signal in at a new location and record nearest location where a phone signal is found – update to site RA. Site RA with updated grid reference for emergency access.	2	2	4

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<p>Aggressive behaviour from members of the public</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Ensure you have permission to access the site (have right on your side).</p> <p>Try to defuse any potentially confrontational situations. If possible walk away. Contact police if unsure or you feel threatened.</p> <p>If you are working alone make sure someone close to you knows your location at all times and check in with them when you arrive and leave the site.</p> <p>Report any abusive landowners to the project team immediately.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Injurious plants – nettles, brambles, hawthorn, blackthorn, Giant Hogweed</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>PPE: gloves, work boots, long sleeves, trousers. All vols to be made aware of hazardous species identification. Particular attention is drawn to Giant Hogweed. This plant must be avoided.</p> <p>Clean and cover wounds. Wash hands before eating.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>6</p>

Assessment completed by: Stephen Brend

Assessment approved by: