



**FRESHWATER
BIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION**



Discovering Priority Habitats in England

Health and Safety Briefing Sheet

Health and safety in the outdoor working environment

Being near any body of water is potentially dangerous. Every effort must be made to minimise risks in the field by observing the following:

- Be aware that your health and safety is your own responsibility.
- Children (under 18) and animals are the full and sole responsibility of the adult volunteer.
- ALWAYS work in pairs or larger groups.
- If you have an existing medical condition, advise others in your group (including what to look out for and what to do if you are taken ill) and carry appropriate medication.
- It is suggested that you carry a mobile phone in case of emergencies but be aware that there may not be a signal in all areas.
- Be aware of weather conditions, wear appropriate clothing for weather and task (including sun protection when necessary).
- Be aware of slip and trip hazards on the way to, and at the site. Wear appropriate stout footwear to minimise risks.
- Avoid steep or unstable banks.
- Watch out for hazards, such as broken glass, sharp metal, sharps such as needles, decomposing waste, and potential sources of attack, including other people and animals.
- When taking water samples, be aware of good posture and always wear gloves.
- Wash hands thoroughly after sampling, and before eating, drinking or smoking.
- Be aware of the potential for contracting Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis), and other diseases, from contact with contaminated water. Inform healthcare professionals of contact with water should illness occur.
- Be aware of the potential for contracting Lyme Disease from ticks in areas surrounding waterbodies. Inform healthcare professionals of potential contact with ticks should illness occur.
- Be aware of contact with potentially harmful plants (e.g. Giant Hogweed), which can cause serious skin lesions on contact.
- Be aware of biosecurity issues and take steps to minimise the risk of transfer of pathogens and non-native invasive species to other sites (always CHECK boots and equipment, CLEAN at the site, make sure boots and equipment are DRY before using at another site).
- Follow a report-in procedure, let someone know where you are going, when you are likely to be back and let them know when you are back. Arrange a procedure for your contact to follow in case you do not return or report on time.
- Do **NOT** undertake sampling if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 e.g. coughing, fever.

Please read and consider the risk assessments provided by the FBA and your local trust respectively, before undertaking work in the field.