

## WATER WATCH

### HEALTH & SAFETY AND RISK ASSESSING

Participating in Water Watch is done at the volunteer's own risk. By taking part it is assumed that you have read this health and safety document and will follow all guidelines to observe your chosen waterway in a safe manner.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### SITE SELECTION

Identify an area that is local to you, that is easy to access and where you can observe your waterway safely. Avoid potentially dangerous areas such as:

- Deep or fast-flowing water
- Steep, slippery or unstable banks
- Banks with deep mud - always test river banks before you step
- Sharp rocks and barbed wire
- Near busy roads
- Near electric fences (which are identified by yellow warning signs)
- Near thorny bushes.

Consider:

- Where you can observe your waterway from a safe access point
- How easy it will be to get out of the water if you fall in
- Whether you will be seen if you fall in and require rescue
- Ensure you are on public land and don't trespass on private land to take part in Water Watch.

### WEATHER & WATERWAY CONDITIONS

- Check the weather forecast before you go out
- Wear appropriate clothing for the weather conditions (e.g. sunscreen and hat, waterproof)
- If there is an adverse weather forecast - such as storms or snow - do not go out and plan to conduct the survey another time
- Be careful after heavy rain as waterway levels can rise quickly
- If the site has flooded or the water level or flow is too high, keep your distance from the waterway
- Be mindful of waterside banks. Do not stand on overhangs, as there is a risk the bank may collapse.

### PERSONAL CARE

- Wear suitable footwear, such as walking shoes or Wellington boots - river banks and paths can be slippery
- Don't put yourself at risk to collect information for the survey
- Ensure you stand at a safe access point
- Waterways may contain bacteria and microorganisms, which pose a risk of contracting illness. To minimise this risk:
  - Don't touch the water
  - If you touch the water, wash your hands before eating or drinking
  - If you experience any symptoms after having contact with the water, seek medical advice. Weil's disease (Leptospirosis) can be contracted from contact with infected water, although rare.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### SURVEY IN PAIRS OR GROUPS

We recommend that you take part with another person or group, for health and safety purposes.

If it is necessary to work alone:

- Take a mobile phone with you
- Ensure someone knows your whereabouts, route and time you plan to return. This person should be told whom to contact if you do not contact them or return
- If you feel unsafe at any point, stop and leave.

### RESPECTING WILDLIFE

- Be mindful of livestock, wildlife and natural habitats, for example, birds nests
- If walking through farmland with livestock to access your site, we recommend not taking a dog with you. If fields contain bulls, do not enter the site
- Avoid disturbing wildlife by keeping a reasonable distance and be cautious in areas such as bushes and long grass, particularly during breeding seasons.

### INCIDENT PROCEDURES

Should any incidents happen, write a report and inform Planet Patrol as soon as possible.

Complete the near miss and incident form and send it via email to [hello@planetpatrol.co](mailto:hello@planetpatrol.co) with the subject line 'Water Watch incident form'.

## RISK ASSESSING

Before joining water watch, you should think about the health and safety considerations specific to your site and complete a risk assessment.

A dynamic risk assessment should be carried out just before the survey to assess any new risks at the site.

See Planet Patrol's template risk assessment below.

## PLANET PATROL TEMPLATE RISK ASSESSMENT

Date Assessment Carried Out:

Assessment Carried Out By:

RISK	HOW CAN RISK BE CONTROLLED & MANAGED?	WHAT FURTHER ACTION MAY BE REQUIRED?	REVIEW COMMENTS & DATE
Sharp object at sampling location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footwear worn at all times</li> <li>• Check areas for hazardous sharp objects like barbed wire and rocks</li> </ul>		
Slips, falls and injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid steep, slippery or unstable banks and uneven ground</li> <li>• Wear appropriate footwear like walking shoes or wellington boots</li> <li>• Carry a mobile phone with sufficient charge and a first aid kit</li> </ul>		
Infection from waterborne diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid touching the water</li> <li>• Cover all cuts and abrasions with waterproof plasters</li> <li>• Sanitise hands before eating food or drinking</li> <li>• Ensure you know the symptoms of Weill's disease and Lyme disease</li> </ul>		
Sun - heat stroke and sunburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear sunscreen and a hat, take lots of water</li> <li>• Take a first aid kit</li> </ul>		
Adverse weather conditions (cold/windy/wet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather forecasts are interpreted, and likely conditions assessed</li> <li>• Do not do the survey after flooding or very heavy rain</li> <li>• Continual dynamic risk assessment is required during surveying</li> <li>• Wear weather-appropriate clothing such as a raincoat, hats, gloves, layers</li> <li>• If the weather worsens, dynamically assess risks and abandon sampling if needed and seek shelter</li> </ul>		

*PLANET PATROL TEMPLATE RISK ASSESSMENT*

RISK	HOW CAN RISK BE CONTROLLED & MANAGED?	WHAT FURTHER ACTION MAY BE REQUIRED?	REVIEW COMMENTS & DATE
Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not disturb or touch wildlife</li> <li>• Do not walk through fields with bulls</li> <li>• Be aware of livestock and keep your distance</li> <li>• Take a first-aid kit</li> </ul>		
Road traffic accident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct survey away from traffic.</li> <li>• Take a mobile phone with full charge with you and have emergency service contact details.</li> <li>• Wear high-visibility clothing if passing near roads.</li> </ul>		
Getting lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan routes in advance</li> <li>• Take a map and phone with full charge with a map application downloaded</li> </ul>		
Lone working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in pairs wherever possible</li> <li>• If lone working cannot be avoided, take a mobile phone with a full charge</li> <li>• Let someone know about your plans, and whereabouts and contact them on your return</li> </ul>		
Drowning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid waterways with deep or fast flowing water</li> <li>• Avoid deep, slippery, unstable banks</li> <li>• Check for hazards before approaching waterway bank</li> <li>• Select a safe access point to observe the waterway</li> </ul>		