

**Risk assessment: Working Near Water**

**Reviewed: 07<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Completed by: Maria Gill, Senior Green Corridors Officer

Approved by: David Walker, Reserve & Maintenance Officer

<b>Hazards</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Who might be harmed</b>	<b>Risk level</b>	<b>Control measure already in use</b>	<b>Effectiveness of those control measures</b>
<b>Falling into water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drowning</li> <li>- Hyperthermia</li> </ul>	Staff Volunteers Public	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work force to be warned of close proximity of water before task begins</li> <li>- Assess the area for trip hazards before work takes place</li> <li>- Ensure everyone is aware of where edge of the bank or water is as this is not always easily seen if bank is highly vegetated</li> <li>- Never work alone near the water</li> <li>- Have ropes, poles, lifebelts readily at hand to avoid others having to enter the water if someone falls in</li> <li>- Have mobile phone to call emergency services</li> </ul>	Medium
<b>Deep or fast flowing water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drowning</li> </ul>	Staff Volunteers Public	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If entering water, chest waders must be worn for water above mid-thigh and below waist height</li> <li>- Never work alone in water</li> <li>- Ensure that there is always someone on the banks to act in the event of an emergency</li> <li>- Have ropes, poles, lifebelts readily at hand to avoid others having to enter the water</li> <li>- Have mobile phone to call emergency services</li> <li>- Still water over waist deep or fast flowing water above knee height must not be worked in</li> </ul>	Medium

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<b>Infection</b>	- Weil's disease	Staff Volunteers Public	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not enter or touch water if have exposed broken skin</li> <li>- Wash hands with antibacterial soap after contact with water</li> <li>- Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking</li> <li>- Follow procedure for Weil's disease i.e. inform doctor of working in water if any illness occurs</li> <li>- Warn volunteers of risk and personal responsibility</li> </ul>	High
<b>Underwater hazards (if entering the water)</b>	- Trips, slips, falls	Staff Volunteers Public	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Survey area for unseen / submerged hazards at start, probe with pole to find soft or deep spots or debris</li> <li>- Use corrugated iron 'duckboards' to prevent sinking into mud</li> <li>- Move carefully and slowly around and in water, do not rush</li> <li>- Wear sturdy footwear with sole and toe protection</li> <li>- Wear sturdy rubber gloves</li> <li>- Use safe access points to water, avoid steep banks</li> <li>- Beware of sharp currents</li> <li>- Carry grab lines / ropes</li> </ul>	Medium
<b>Manual handling Lifting or moving heavy objects or objects that are difficult to grasp</b>	- Back pain and damage in other muscles	Staff Volunteers	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instruct on and monitor safe manual handling techniques, using legs and arms not back to lift pull or push</li> <li>- Use several people to move heavy or awkward items</li> <li>- Do not allow public to lift or move heavy objects</li> </ul>	High
<b>Polluted water</b>	- Exposure to harmful substances	Staff Volunteers	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look for evidence of pollution (froth on surface, petrol etc)</li> <li>- If in doubt, do not enter water</li> <li>- If hazardous substances are found, stop work and report to Environment Agency and no public to enter water in this instance</li> </ul>	Medium

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<b>Dead animals</b>	- Infection	Staff Volunteers	High	- Only touch when absolutely necessary and with extreme caution - Wear rubber gauntlets - Wash hands and arms immediately afterwards with anti-bacterial soap - Disinfect protective clothing that may have come into contact with a corpse or hazardous materials - Inform Environment Agency or equivalent before disposing of corpse and no public access in this instance	High
<b>Chest waders</b>	- Entrapment	Staff Volunteers	Moderate	- All wearers of chest waders to have instruction in how to get out of them before using them - No public to use chest waders. Restrict to slow flowing, low water levels or no access	High
<b>Adverse weather – extremes of hot, cold, wet</b>	- Sun stroke/hypothermia - Slipping on wet floor	Staff Volunteers Public	Moderate	-People to come prepared with waterproofs, sunscreen, hats, warm clothes etc. -Wear appropriate (gripped) footwear in wet conditions -All staff & volunteers will look out for anyone showing signs of being affected by the weather. Seek first aid if signs severe.	High

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<p><b>Contact with plants</b></p> <p><b>Nettles</b></p> <p><b>Brambles</b></p> <p><b>Hemlock</b></p> <p><b><i>Giant hogweed</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Japanese knotweed</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poisoning</li> <li>- Blistering</li> <li>- Irritation</li> <li>- Scratches</li> <li>- Splinters</li> <li>- Nettle stings</li> <li>- Toxins in plant are harmful to humans</li> <li>- Eye injuries</li> </ul>	<p>Staff</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Public</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify presence and location of hazardous plants</li> <li>- Plan work to avoid contact with hazardous plants</li> <li>- Identification of plants provided for all participants</li> <li>- Information provided about the identified risks</li> <li>- Wear protective thick long sleeves and trousers when working close nettles or brambles</li> <li>- Wear protective gloves</li> <li>- Wash exposed skin thoroughly in warm soapy water, rinse and dry after any skin contact and before eating, drinking or smoking</li> <li>- Dispose of plant debris carefully</li> <li>- Do not touch poisonous plants like hemlock or giant hogweed under any circumstances</li> <li>- To reduce the spread of Japanese knotweed participants should not handle it where possible.</li> </ul>	<p>High</p>
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