

APPENDIX C

Health & Safety Matters

Hazards

There are two basic types of hazard:

1. Inherent hazards These are already on the project site and include underground cables and drains, difficult access and dangerous rubbish abandoned on site. Also consider hazardous plants, such as giant hogweed, and any known locations of wasp's nests or adder sightings. Some things may be inherent hazards only at certain times of the year, e.g. toxic blue-green algae can form in ponds and rivers under certain conditions in summer. These hazards should be recorded on any site survey or management plan you make, along with the location of the nearest telephone and hospital. Check that it has an accident and emergency department open in case of emergency. If any volunteer has a mobile phone, encourage them to bring it. They have already saved lives through speeding up emergency response. Remember always to have a vehicle parked ready to leave.

2. Created hazards These stem from your activities and start from the moment volunteers meet. Loading tools, standing around in the road by minibuses, transporting tools (make sure they are well wrapped and stored) using tools and cutting through undergrowth are just some of them. Contrary to some claims, experienced workers have accidents just like newcomers, often through familiarity and the resulting carelessness with the hazard. Proper tool maintenance can play an important part in minimising hazards.

In addition it is important that you are aware of the possible health hazards associated with outdoor work, some of which are listed for you below.

Tetanus Can be contracted through cuts and broken skin. It is advisable to have an up-to-date tetanus immunisation from your GP.

Bites and stings Wear long sleeves and gloves to try and avoid unnecessary bites and stings. If you know yourself to have allergies to insect bites or similar, please let the volunteer leader know and ensure you take with you on site any relevant medication you might have (such as an epi-pen).

Weils disease Weils disease (Leptospirosis) is a bacterial infection carried in rats urine and found in water. Another form of Leptospirosis can be found in cattle urine. Humans can contract the disease through cuts on the skin and around the eyes and mouth. If you are working in an area with a risk of Weils disease such as wetland areas, ensure that you cover up any existing cuts and avoid rubbing your eyes or mouth until you have thoroughly washed your hands.

Lyme's disease This can be transmitted to humans when bitten by ticks that usually live on deer and sheep. Keep skin covered and avoid brushing against vegetation such as bracken.

Toxocara canis This is a micro-organism found in dog faeces which can cause blindness, particularly in children. Avoid contact with faeces and ensure to wash skin with soap and water immediately if contact is unavoidable.

Bracken The plant is toxic, always wear long sleeves and trousers when working in bracken, keeping skin covered. Dust masks are advisable during the summer.

First Aid Kits

No matter how good your risk avoidance, sooner or later someone will hurt themselves. A first aid kit must be available and everyone should know where it is and who can help. A standard first aid kit, normally sufficient for a group of 10-12 people, contains the following items. If your work results in a greater than usual need for first aid, e.g. because of clearing thorny undergrowth or working on two areas within a site, then have extra kits available.

A standard first aid kit

First aid boxes should be waterproof, made of suitable material designed to protect the contents from damp and dust, and clearly identified as first aid containers. Some chemists and office supply firms offer such kits ready made up, but these boxes are not always waterproof or sturdy enough to take on a conservation project. Old metal ammunition boxes are ideal. The markings used should be a white cross on a green background as required by the Safety Signs Regulations Act 1980. Any chemists should be able to supply the materials to stock them with. A standard first aid kit should include:

- 1 guidance card
- 20 sterile adhesive dressings, individually wrapped
- 2 sterile eye pads
- 6 triangular bandages, individually wrapped
- 6 safety pins
- 6 medium, sterile, un-medicated dressings, individually wrapped
- 2 large, sterile, un-medicated dressings, individually wrapped
- 3 extra large, sterile, un-medicated dressings, individually wrapped
- Disposable fine elastic/rubber gloves to prevent contact with body fluids
- Where mains tap water is not available for eye irrigation, at least 900ml of sterile water or sterile normal saline (0.9%) in sealed disposable containers should be provided.

A recommended welfare kit

Groups should also have a welfare kit. This must not contain any form of medication like aspirin. Volunteers should bring these themselves if they think they might need them. Suggested contents could include:

- pair of tweezers
- pair of scissors
- needle and thread
- cotton wool
- sanitary lotion
- wet wipes and hand towels
- toilet roll / paper towels
- insect repellent
- barrier cream
- sun block
- pencil / pen
- mobile phone
- box of matches/lighter
- swiss army knife
- pocket torch

All items in the welfare kit should be for self-administration only and should be marked as such.