



# Health and Safety Matters

## Volunteer Health and Safety Newsletter

Issue 3, Autumn 2022

### Reporting accidents, near misses and other incidents

Please ensure you promptly report all accidents, near misses and incidents to your Primary Contact without delay.

### Update to Bonfires Safe Working Procedure (SWP)

The bonfires SWP 25 was recently revised and updated. Key changes include advice not to tackle fires if they get out of control, STOP, DROP and ROLL instructions if clothing catches fire and not to use liquid accelerants to start fires.

Contact the H&S Manager or your Primary Contact for a copy of the updated Bonfires SWP.

### Cold weather working

As the weather is likely to turn considerably colder as we pass through autumn here are some general tips for cold weather working:

- Wrap up warmly in clothing suitable for outdoors
- Take more frequent breaks
- Drink warm fluids such as warm soups and hot drinks
- Keep alert to possible symptoms of cold stress

[Further information](#) from the Health and Safety Executive

### Volunteer health and safety newsletter

The purpose of this quarterly Health and Safety Newsletter is to communicate key updates on health and safety to our Volunteers. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for the Newsletter please contact, Justin Tyas, H&S Manager – contact details below.

### Avian influenza (Bird Flu)

**Bird flu is an infectious type of influenza that spreads among birds and there are many different types. Some strains of bird flu can pass to humans but this is extremely rare. It usually requires very close contact with an infected bird so the risk to humans is considered very low.**

**Unfortunately, since August 2022 we have reports of sick and dead birds at Stockers Lake and the nearby Springwell Lake, and suspect these are bird flu-related.**

Whilst we are awaiting confirmation from DEFRA that we are dealing with bird flu we are taking the situation extremely seriously. The Trust has been working with a specialist contractor to safely collect, test and dispose of carcasses as quickly as possible but understandably there are sometimes unavoidable delays.

### What should I do if I come across dead or sick birds on our nature reserves?

**Do not touch or pick up** any dead or visibly sick birds that you find. You should not touch wild bird feathers or surfaces contaminated with bird droppings. Dogs should be kept on a lead and away from dead or sick birds.

Bird flu is unconnected with the coronavirus (Covid 19) but when working outside you should continue to follow good hygiene practices of regularly washing or sanitizing your hands.

### Reporting of dead birds

To report any sick or dead birds found on our nature reserves please email [birdflu@hmwt.org](mailto:birdflu@hmwt.org) letting us know the reserve name, how many birds you found, the species (if you can), and exact location they are on site (via description, grid ref or what3words ideally). To report dead wild birds away from our nature reserves, call the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77

**Further information can be found at the [DEFRA website](#)**

## Simplification of Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA) process for recording power tool use

The Control of Vibration Regulations requires organisations to protect people from risks to health from exposure to excessive vibration.

Following annual vibration testing of power tools (chainsaws, brush cutters etc.) earlier this year, the Reserves Team are putting new vibration control stickers on each tool.



New **Maximum Daily Use stickers** are being fixed to each tool. They should help us to better monitor exposure to vibration and have given the Trust an opportunity to simplify the recording and monitoring of operators use of power tools. Going forward we intend to only record the trigger time if the Max Daily Use time is exceeded.

Minor changes have been made to our DRA form for recording power tool use only. The rest of the DRA form remains the same. The Trust is in the process of communicating the change to Wardens and Volunteers who lead work parties and activities using power tools in advance of implementing the simplified process from October 2022.

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## *Safety doesn't happen by accident*

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### Volunteering and mental health

The World Health Organisation recognises World Mental Health Day on 10 October every year.

The theme of 2022's World Mental Health Day, set by the World Federation for Mental Health, is *'Make mental health and wellbeing for all a global priority'*

World Mental Health Day is also a chance to talk about mental health in general, how we need to look after it, and how important it is to talk about things and get help if you are struggling.

According to research, people become happier over time after they start volunteering.

Although it's true that people who are happier do tend to spend more time volunteering, a [research published in the Journal of Happiness Studies](#) suggests that you don't need to already feel happy in order to benefit from it. In fact, some research suggests that people who start out with lower levels of well-being may even get a bigger boost from volunteering.

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For anyone struggling with their mental health, Samaritans can provide non-judgmental support. They are contactable free 24/7 on **116 123**



## Contact

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