



Health and Safety Matters

Volunteer Health and Safety Newsletter

Issue 6, Summer 2023

Volunteer Warden H&S Representative – Robert Phillips, Thorley Wash Nature Reserves Warden

The Health Safety and Personnel Committee (HSPC) support the development and delivery of the Trust's strategy, reviewing staff structure, staff wellbeing, health and safety, safeguarding and policies.

The HSPC meets quarterly and is Chaired by one of our Trustees, Jackie Hunter. It's a consultative committee which makes recommendations to Council on strategic matters including updates to relevant policies.

Volunteers now have a representative on the committee as Robert Phillips has recently joined for an initial 1-year period as Volunteer Warden HSPC Representative.

General queries or concerns about health and safety should continue to be directed to the Trust's Health and Safety Manager but Robert can be contacted on robertpwarden@btinternet.com

Contact the H&S Manager or your Primary Contact for copies of updated policies, risk assessments and safe working procedures or visit the [H&S SharePoint Site](#) – contact H&S Manager for access

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.

Volunteering: Your Health and wellbeing

The Trust recognises the enormous contribution made by our volunteers; we simply couldn't deliver on our strategy without you! It has also been well established that volunteering is good for both your physical and mental health.

Inclusive organisations allow its staff and volunteers to contribute within their own capacity and helps to prevent those with limitations due to illness or aging from having to leave. Sometimes adjustments have to be made to fulfil our legal obligations including our duty of care to our volunteers. Where possible, it is much better to be proactive, taking an inclusive approach to problem solving - this is the Trust's commitment to its volunteers where changes to health arise.

Your health

Volunteers should seek the advice of a medical professional prior to undertaking volunteering if they have any health concerns or questions, or if their health changes and it may affect their volunteering with the Trust.

Volunteers should inform the Trust of relevant health information that could affect their volunteering. If an individual's health changes in a way which could affect their volunteering, they must let their primary contact know immediately and this information will be treated sensitively and held in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. The Trust will seek to make reasonable adjustments to the role.

The Trust may ask a volunteer to provide a note from their doctor before they volunteer for the Trust or if their health changes. If a volunteer fails to provide sufficient evidence proving they are fit to volunteer, they may be asked to cease volunteering with the Trust or to adapt their role. For some roles with a higher level of responsibility such as Reserves Wardens, the Trust may offer to arrange an assessment with an occupational therapist. As a last resort, failure to comply may lead to the volunteer being asked to cease volunteering with the Trust.

Further information can be found in the Volunteer Handbook.

Reporting accidents, near misses and other incidents

Please ensure you promptly report all accidents, near misses and incidents to your Primary Contact or the H&S Manager without delay.

Update to Sun Protection Safe Working Procedure (SWP 31)

The SWP Sun Protection was fully revised and updated to include advice for working outdoors in hotter weather. The revised SWP has been renamed Working in the Sun and Hot Weather Working Outdoors.

As the temperature is likely to rise over the summer and the sun becomes more intense here are some good practice suggestions when working outdoors in hot weather and direct sun:

- take frequent breaks
- drink plenty of water
- cover up and keep your top on
- don't forget sun cream
- regularly top up protection
- be alert to possible heat stress / heat exhaustion

Risk Assessment and SWP for River / Pond Dipping

River Dipping has been combined into a single risk assessment and SWP with Pond Dipping with the differences between these two activities made explicit in the documentation.

Safety doesn't happen by accident

Vibration control – magnitude measurements of tools and personal monitoring

Vibration can occur when using work equipment such as power tools and cutting equipment. "Hand Arm Vibration" (HAV), is vibration transmitted from work equipment into the person's hands and arms.

Exposure to excessive vibration can have a negative effect on health. It could damage joints, muscles, circulation and sensory nerves. This could lead to considerable pain, time off or even permanent disability. There are legal vibration exposure limits which should not be exceeded.

The Trust has recently had independent vibration magnitude measurements undertaken on all power tools by a specialist contractor. All power tools have been marked with a new sticker colored sticker indicating the **Maximum Daily Use Time** which should not be exceeded.

As part of our Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA) procedure all power tool users are required to check the individual stickers on the power tools and make a record on the DRA form. **If the trigger time – actual time spent on the power tool is exceeded this must be recorded on the DRA form for further consideration.**

Lone Working

If you undertake lone working as agreed with the Trust you should have a buddy organised. A 'buddy' system is a simple way of tracking your location and your expected return time and is often operated in pairs. A buddy would normally be a partner or relative or friend who will have agreed to be your buddy.

If for any reason you experience difficulty or have an accident while working alone, your safety could be at risk – especially if there is a long delay before anyone realises that you haven't returned. A minor incident could develop into something more serious if it is not realised that you have failed to return and are not found quickly.

When working alone, you must observe the following rules:

- Ensure that your 'buddy' knows where you are going and your travel plans including expected time of return.
- Let your 'buddy' know if you make changes to your plans or move sites and contact your 'buddy' to advise of your safe return.
- Ensure that you have arranged for a temporary 'buddy' to act for you in the event that your regular 'buddy' is on leave or otherwise indisposed.
- Ensure you and your buddy know who to contact at the Trust should it be necessary to escalate concerns

Contact

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