

Potential risks for survey volunteers

The aim of this checklist is to help you improve your own personal safety while carrying out People's Trust for Endangered Species' (PTES) surveys in the field. The activities and hazards are not intended to be completely exhaustive; this assessment is for guidance only. Remember that each site and survey type is unique and thus risks must be assessed individually. If you are in doubt about any aspect of health and safety relating to a site or survey seek further advice from PTES before proceeding. Further advice along with a risk assessment record template can be found at www.ptes.org/healthandsafety.

Please remember that as a volunteer you are under no obligation to take part in this survey. You should not put yourself or any others in danger.

Potential hazard	Precautions to be taken to remove hazard or reduce risk level (one precaution may tackle several hazards)
Danger of injury through accident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential hazards on arrival at each site • Wear suitable clothing and appropriate footwear for the location/terrain and weather conditions • Carry a mobile phone with sufficient charge • Carry a torch and spare batteries if working late afternoon • Carry a first aid kit • Ensure you have access to drinking water • Talk to landowners about the location of potentially hazardous animals • Avoid contact with animals • Avoid well known danger spots. Do not cross railway lines or other potential hazardous sites e.g. quarries or ravines
Inclement weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear appropriate clothing for the time of year, and be prepared for weather changes • Carry waterproof and/or warm clothing. Hazards can increase significantly in heavy rain, strong wind and thunderstorms • Avoid/terminate outside activity in inclement weather as appropriate
Uneven ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential hazards in daylight • Wear sturdy boots or shoes • Use footpaths where possible • Do not carry out distracting work whilst walking
Traffic/driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High visibility clothing should be worn whenever working in the vicinity of roads and someone else should keep watch for traffic • Take care to park sensibly, preferably off-road, and do not block entrances • Do not attempt to undertake surveys alone whilst driving • Do not brake or swerve to make a survey observation or get out of your vehicle to identify a sighting unless safe to do so • If you need to stop to record survey information ensure it is safe to do so; do not stop on the hard shoulder of a motorway unless it is an emergency
Getting lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't rely solely on a mobile phone for navigation, always take a map and compass and know how to use them

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Alcohol and drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not permitted to take part in any PTES activities. If you are using prescribed drugs, seek medical advice on any side effects that may affect your performance (eg drowsiness)
Lone working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working alone should be avoided. Try to work in a pair. If this is not possible, always notify someone (partner, friend, neighbour) where you are going and when you expect to be back. Agree on a course of action if you have not returned home by the time you stated • Lone workers should be aware of the location of the nearest house or phone so that help can be called if required. Anyone working alone, or those working on sites remote from the emergency services, should carry a mobile phone. This should be tested at the start of the visit to detect reception blind spots
Tetanus and leptospirosis (Weil's disease)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While not common, these diseases can have severe effects, and in rare cases result in death. Clean any cuts etc immediately with clean water and cover adequately • Ensure that your anti-tetanus treatments are up-to-date (normally within the last 10 years) • Avoid contact with water, particularly if contaminated with cattle/rat urine • Wash hands thoroughly and always before eating or smoking. If you contract flu-like symptoms, tell your doctor that you may have been exposed to Weil's disease
Lyme's disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When working in grassland areas with deer present, wear long trousers and long socks. Check exposed skin after for ticks. If a tick is found and you contract flu-like symptoms, tell your doctor that you may have been exposed to Lyme's disease • If you do find a tick on your skin, remove it by gently gripping it as close to the skin as possible, preferably using fine-toothed tweezers, and pull steadily away
Salmonella and toxocariasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are rare infections spread from animals to humans via their faeces. If you need to inspect animal droppings do so by using a small stick. Wear gloves if you need to collect samples • Wash hands after handling animals or coming into contact with animal droppings, soil, sand or water that may be contaminated
Bees and wasps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group leader should be made aware if anyone has an allergy to bee or wasp stings and the individual concerned should carry appropriate personal medication
Risk of drowning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-swimmers should be accompanied when walking by water • Do not cross rivers or streams unless by bridge • Avoid work when there is a risk of flooding and be aware of tides • Keep at safe distance from banks, cliffs and the water's edge
Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid touching or climbing over electric fences • Avoid touching or climbing over barbed-wire fences, please make sure your tetanus vaccine is up to date
Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of low, fallen and hanging branches and take care to avoid them • Do not climb trees or onto tree limbs • Be aware of other wildlife when investigating tree cavities or nest boxes – especially bees, wasps and hornets