



Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society (DaNES)

Hazard & Risk Assessment for Field (Outdoor) Events & Activities (For group and solo participants)

Date: 4 May 2020

Author: Russell Nevin

INTRODUCTION

This risk assessment document is to highlight the hazards which may be encountered when undertaking entomological recording, surveying and collecting in the field, i.e. generally outdoors, in association with or on behalf of DaNES. Actions for mitigating and minimising the risks associated with these hazards are included.

All members of DaNES should be issued with this document, and any revisions, by the most appropriate means. Generally this will be via email, though some members may prefer a hard copy, or other suitable methods (including references to it in the DaNES website and Social media). The leader, organiser or nominated contact of a field meeting must ensure participants are aware of this document prior to the event taking place. Members inviting non-members to an event should ensure they are aware and understand it, preferably sending a copy in advance, or if this is not possible then discuss it with participants at the start of the event. Advice to refer to this document should be given when events are publicised.

Additional considerations:

1. Every DaNES member and non-member participating in a DaNES event or activity is responsible for his/her own safety. DaNES cannot be considered liable for the consequences of obviously unwise or unsafe practices carried out by event or activity participants.
2. Whilst care has been taken, the hazards and associated risks and mitigations given in the tables below cannot include every possible situation that might be encountered when undertaking fieldwork, the nature of which can often lead to unpredictable or unthought-of situations. A large degree of common-sense must therefore be exercised by everyone participating in an event or activity so that the adverse effects of likely, or unexpected, hazards met are minimised.
3. Event leaders, organisers or nominated contacts should always attempt to avail themselves of local knowledge by site specialists e.g. wardens, rangers etc. who may be acquainted with specific site hazards.

This assessment is not solely suitable for special sites where access is generally restricted e.g. railways, airfields, prisons, MOD land etc. or for under-water activities. Additional assessments may be required for these (and will generally be a requirement before access is granted).

RISK ASSESSMENT: Generic Field Work Activities

Hazard	Risk(s)	Mitigation(s) (Numbers relate to risk numbers)
Weather conditions	<p>1. Exposure from heavy rain, lightening or cold</p> <p>2. Sunburn & heatstroke</p>	<p>1. Wear appropriate clothing, headgear and footwear. Avoid exposed sites if thunderstorms expected. Cancel the event if the risk is considered too great.</p> <p>2. Apply sunscreen, especially during hours 11am to 3pm and/or wear suitable hat/clothing. Cloudy and hazy conditions may be more dangerous than direct sun. Carry water and keep hydrated.</p>
<p>Terrain, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven ground • Steep inclines • Rocky slopes • River and lake banks • Tracks and roads • Boggy ground • Low tree branches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slips, trips & falls • Potholes • Walking into objects • Encounters with public and private (e.g. farm) traffic and equipment • Suitability for disabled participants e.g. wheelchair or powered scooter access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader to describe terrain and accessibility at start of event/activity • Look where you are going! • Know your capabilities, i.e. don't work in areas you might have difficulty in negotiating • Avoid areas where road maintenance or farm activities are being carried out, or busy road verges.
Working at height	Falls from height resulting in serious injury or death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid if practicable, by using long reach equipment, binoculars etc. • If elevated access with ladder is required, ensure minimum 2 persons, with one "footing" the ladder. Tie off at top when in position. • For extensive work, consider use of mobile elevated working platform e.g. "cherry

		picker”, or use trained rope workers.
Site navigation	Getting lost and inadvertently encountering unplanned hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a map of the site • Mobile phone recommended • GPS tracker recommended (useful for data recording too)
Infection & disease (Biocenoses) SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF SUSPECTED	1. Lyme disease (Lyme borreliosis) from tick bites 2. Weil's disease (Leptospirosis) from rat urine 3. General insect/spider bites and stings 4. Soil & water borne infections, e.g. Weil's disease & hepatitis A 5. Infections from animal remains & faeces	1. Body check for ticks at end of field work, especially if working in long grass 2. Keep cuts and abrasions covered. Wear rubber gloves if practical, especially when working in water 3. Can't usually avoid but insect repellent advisable on exposed skin. If susceptible carry appropriate measures against extreme reactions, e.g. anaphylaxis 4. Wear rubber gloves if practical or, if can't wash hands on site, clean hands with antiseptic wipes. Avoid touching mucus membranes, e.g. eyes 5. As 4. Take particular care when searching for invertebrates in dung.
People	1. Some may question and criticise what you are doing, possibly aggressively 2. Other hazardous activity may be taking place on site e.g. shooting, rallying 3. Illegal activity may be taking place e.g. poaching, fly tipping, theft	1. Be prepared to explain what you are doing as politely and succinctly as possible. Avoid confrontation 2. Be prepared to modify the activity or suspend it if required. 3. Avoid confrontation, though take details if safe to do so. Do not leave valuable equipment unsecured or unattended.
Domestic animals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock, e.g. cattle • Pets, e.g. dogs 	1. Cattle – crush injuries 2. Bulls – direct injuries 3. Dogs – trips and bites	1. Avoid cattle, especially with calves and/or if dogs in field 2. Avoid fields with bulls 3. Avoid aggressive dogs!
Equipment	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light trap bulb heat or catastrophic failure 	Know your equipment – take extra care if using sharp or cutting equipment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UV light from light traps Note – UV emission from broken MV bulbs is highly dangerous – can cause serious eye and skin injury • Electric shock when using generators or other electrical equipment • Falling from ladders • Tool accidents, e.g. from hammers, saws, knives etc. • Serious burns if fuel ignites whilst refuelling generators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using a ladder for placing traps at height see “Working at height” section above. • Make sure all electrical equipment is safe before use – take extra care to avoid electric shock when using in wet conditions. Use appropriate earth protection. • If using a light trap take care to let bulb cool before dismantling. • Avoid MV bulb use in wet weather. Use rain-guard if raining or rain expected as bulb failure more likely. If UV emission bulb in use avoid looking directly at the light, especially if glass is broken; wearing eye protection with UV filter is recommended • Follow supplier instructions for refuelling generators.
<p>Deep Water (i.e. when on a boat or on shore), e.g. rivers, ponds and lakes. See also Infection & Disease</p>	<p>Drowning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A personal flotation device (e.g. life jacket) must be worn at all times • Avoid working alone on water • Avoid working from a boat in high winds or during a thunderstorm
<p>Wildlife</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small mammals • Large mammals e.g. rutting deer • Snakes (Adder) • Insects & spiders • Injury causing plants (e.g. thorns) 	<p>Bites and stings, cuts/grazes or more serious trauma in case of large animals</p>	<p>Avoid the hazard. Do not walk amongst large animals where they may have young or during mating times. Do not reach into burrows or areas without clear visibility unless suitable protective gloves worn. Also see Infection & disease</p>

Physical activity	Tiredness & muscle strain. Possible aggravation of existing medical conditions.	Know your limitations. Avoid heavy weights without assistance (e.g. turning large logs and stones etc.)
Motorised traffic. e.g. on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads and roadsides • Farmyards • Farm tracks • Public amenity/park maintenance tracks 	Collision with vehicles, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars • Tractors • Trucks • Agricultural machinery • Roadside mowers 	Stay alert – avoid working close to roads or where vehicles are operating. If this is necessary for research work, working with a partner is advised.
Night-time working (includes crepuscular)	All of the above apply. However, many of the risks are enhanced after dark, especially in difficult terrain and near water	Extra care needed – carry a strong torch with spare batteries. Using a head torch (in addition) is advised. Be vigilant. Avoid working on own if possible, otherwise ensure a contact is aware of expected time of return
Young people accompanying the group	Whilst their engagement is to be positively encouraged, young people may be less appreciative of all the hazards described above	Any person under the age of 18 years must have an adult member of the group responsible for their welfare.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Suggestions for corrections and amendments to this document are actively encouraged by users. Please advise the event contact or any DaNES committee member.

This document was prepared by the author at the request of the DaNES committee, and is based on a risk assessment published by the British Entomological and Natural History Society (BENHS). DaNES wishes to express its gratitude to BENHS for permission to use this resource.