

Risk Assessment for Essex RiverWatch



This form is the Risk Assessment for volunteers within the Essex RiverWatch programme.

The top half of this document contains a general risk assessment. Please read and understand this guidance and keep all training and sampling methodology in mind when performing a survey.

For those who have completed in person training, a signature sheet is provided to confirm you have completed your training and understood this. For those completing online training, an online version of this form can be completed with an electronic signature.

At the bottom of this form you will find a dynamic risk assessment. Complete this on every visit. Sign and date this for all individuals and keep this safe. To print just this, from the print menu select only to print page 8.

Through the completion of the signatory form during training, you agree that you take all responsibility for mitigating risk of harm to yourself and other volunteers by taking reasonable measures and planning.

You also agree that the Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust, on behalf of the Essex Rivers Hub and the Essex RiverWatch, may request a copy of your completed forms for auditing. We will randomly select a set number of participants for this annually. Failure to provide this documentation may result in either further auditing or removal from the RiverWatch for repeated offences.

In the event of an incident or near miss occurring, you can use the incident form on the RiverWatch webpage [Essex RiverWatch Tutorials \(essexrivershub.org/riverwatch-tutorials\)](https://www.essexrivershub.org/riverwatch-tutorials) and send to RiverWatch@EssexSuffolkRiversTrust.org.

Those participating as part of a group will need to keep in line with your group's safety guidelines as well.

Risk Assessment Model

The risk model below has been used to assess the likelihood (possibility) and severity of our activities and is based upon the HSE Risk Based Approach – Risk Model.

Severity is based upon the RIDDOR reporting criteria and likelihood is given by how likely an event may happen.

Severity	Likelihood
No Injury	Nil/Negligible
First Aid Injury	Remote
Time off Work Injury	Occasional
Major Injury	Probable
Fatal / Disabling	Frequent

		Likelihood				
		Frequent	Probable	Occasional	Remote	Negligible
Severity	No Injury	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	First Aid Injury	Med	Med	Med	Low	Low
	Time off work Injury	High	High	High	Med	Low
	Major Injury	High	High	High	Med	Low
	Fatal / Disabling	High	High	High	Med	Low

Surveys will only be undertaken when **every** risk has a **low** outcome once the matrix has been applied.

Item	Risk of injury		Precautions needed to reduce risks	Risk of injury with precautions		
	Severity of injury	Likelihood		Severity of injury	Likelihood	Outcome
Uneven ground and slips, trips, cuts and falls	Major Injury	Occasional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Complete the sampling in pairs or small groups. Lone working is to be avoided. -Make sure that you have alerted someone to where you are going, what you are doing and when you will be back. -Carry a fully charged mobile phone with emergency contacts programmed in. -Always conduct a dynamic visual risk assessment on arrival when working near water and stop monitoring if conditions are unsafe or if additional safety control measures are needed. -Ensure you have completed the section on nearest hospital in your dynamic risk assessment. -Only sample where it is safe to do so. Your site should have been selected due to accessibility. -Be aware of uneven ground, slippery banks, thick vegetation, hidden objects, hidden fencing, animal holes, potentially sharp objects (e.g. glass, needles) etc. -Any persons with a needle injury to seek medical advice immediately. Call local council when safe to do so. -Avoid areas of thick bramble, brambles dangling or tall vegetation where it is not certain what is hidden within it, particularly next to watercourse with steep banks. -Ensure all those present are wearing appropriate footwear and clothing. -Carry a First Aid kit. -Identify if anyone in the group is First Aid Trained or a medical professional prior to commencing monitoring. Consider emergency first aid training if you are not trained. 	First Aid Injury	Remote	Low
Working near water: falling in (immersion, cold water shock, hypothermia, drowning, death)	Fatal/Disabling	Occasional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Never enter the water -Complete the sampling in pairs or small groups. Lone working is to be avoided. 	First Aid Injury	Negligible	Low

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -You will have selected a suitable monitoring point with easy access to the water's edge. -Always conduct a visual dynamic risk assessment on arrival when working near water and stop if conditions are unsafe or if additional control measures are needed. -Complete the box on the dynamic risk assessment regarding local hospital facilities and ensure the group are aware of their location. -Do not sample if it is unsafe to do so. -Carry a fully charged mobile phone with emergency contacts programmed in. -Be aware of particularly dangerous or deep areas with a high severity of injury or drowning if someone falls in. Consider another site if your sample site covers a particularly dangerous stretch of river. -Communicate any dangers with others in your group and alert others if you see they are acting dangerously. -Consider bringing PPE: Throw lines, lifejackets, high visibility jackets, thermal blankets and spare clothes. -If anyone taking part accidentally falls in the water, action to be taken immediately and take them to the hospital. -If footwear gets stuck, pull back boots to release suction. Where walking on mud is unavoidable, a flat surface, e.g. a plank, can be of use for assisting people out of deep mud. -Identify if anyone in the group is First Aid Trained or a medical professional prior to commencing monitoring 			
Manual Handling	Time off Work Injury	Occasional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Only collect around 2l (2kg) of water for a sample or less. Using a small bucket can help with this. -Lift with a straight back and avoid twisting if bending down -Be careful when carrying the sample, lift this correctly. -If needed, it is better to collect multiple small samples rather than one large to fill the turbidity tube. 	First Aid Injury	Negligible	Low
Livestock and other animals	Fatal/ Disabling	Occasional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If at all possible, avoid areas with livestock -Only enter an area with large livestock (e.g. cows and horses) if the owner /farmer is accompanying or present. -Be aware of dogs, both on and off leads. Politely make any dogs and their walkers conscious of your presence to avoid frightening them. 	First Aid Injury	Negligible	Low

			<p>-If dogs approach you in an aggressive way, try to leave for a safe place e.g. behind a fence, calmly.</p> <p>-If bitten, stop sampling and seek immediate medical attention. Dog bites should be washed with clean water for 10 minutes, even if the skin is not broken.</p> <p>-Speak with the owner and take down details if necessary. -</p> <p>The incident should be reported to the police and local authority's dog warden if considered a serious incident.</p> <p>-Avoid suitable adder habitat. If bitten by an adder seek immediate hospital attention</p> <p>(https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/animals/reptiles-and-amphibians/adder/)</p>			
Insect bites/stings	Fatal/ Disabling	Occasional	<p>-If stung by a bee or wasp, treat with first aid creams and assess if you can continue. Move away from the area if sting was caused by nest disturbance or similar. Carry an EpiPen if known to be allergic and mobile phone to call for help Assess site for evidence of insect nests prior to monitoring.</p>	First Aid Injury	Remote	
Plants harmful to human health (e.g. giant hogweed, wild parsnip, hemlock, Hemlock water dropwort, nettle, thorned plants)	Major Injury	Occasional	<p>-If Injurious plants are identified (see identification sheet) then avoid the area and notify landowner and your group</p> <p>-Avoid contact with skin for all plants of risk.</p> <p>-Wear appropriate clothing (long sleeves and trousers)</p> <p>-If exposed to (giant hogweed) sap, wash immediately, cover from daylight, seek medical assistance as soon as practical.</p> <p>-Keep a good standard of hygiene and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or sanitising gel before eating</p>	First Aid Injury	Remote	Low
Microbiological disease e.g. Weil's disease/ leptospirosis, <i>E. coli</i>	Fatal/ Disabling	Remote	<p>-Bacteria may be present in and on the banks any watercourse where infected animals have urinated (mainly rodents, also cattle and pigs).</p> <p>-Wear protective gloves when sampling (preferably nitrile).</p> <p>-Observe good hygiene – wash hands and use antibacterial hand wash after exposure.</p> <p>-Understand Weil's disease and its symptoms prior to monitoring. (see webpage)</p> <p>-Avoid eating, smoking and drinking with dirty hands.</p> <p>-Seek medical advice if presenting symptoms after contact with water.</p>	Time off Work Injury	Negligible	Low

			<p>-Some diseases can take time to present so if you present within a month, seek medical help or visit your GP and discuss your contact with river water.</p> <p>Ecoli (hse.gov.uk)</p> <p>Wiels disease (hse.gov.uk)</p>			
Ticks, Lymes disease	Time off Work Injury	Remote	<p>-Understand the risks prior to monitoring (see website).</p> <p>- Long sleeves and trousers (tucked in) to be worn in areas of possible risk (tall vegetation).</p> <p>-Check clothing/skin for signs of ticks.</p> <p>-If bitten seek medical advice and monitoring for a 'bullseye' rash around bite for at least a couple of weeks after being bitten.</p> <p>-Remove ticks (if found) with tweezers or tick hook and seek medical advice.</p> <p>Lymes Disease (hse.gov.uk)</p>	Time off Work Injury	Negligible	Low
Chemical/biological hazards (e.g. organic pollution, agricultural chemicals, blue green algae, sewage fungus)	Time off Work Injury	Remote	<p>-Check for cuts or abrasions before starting, cover suitably.</p> <p>-Wash hands/sanitise before, drinking eating or smoking.</p> <p>-Avoid sampling close to outlets e.g. storm water overflows</p> <p>-Wear (nitrile) gloves when monitoring.</p> <p>-Do not place any equipment in or near your mouth/face. Do not handle sampling sticks by the pads, only handle the plastic section.</p> <p>-Used test strips can be disposed of in a normal litter bin.</p> <p>-Used sample water (from the bucket, turbidity tube or phosphate tube) can be disposed of by pouring on the ground or back into the river.</p> <p>-Seek medical advice if feeling unwell</p>	Time off Work Injury	Negligible	Low
Adverse weather conditions	Fatal/ Disabling	Occasional	<p>-Check weather forecast prior to monitoring.</p> <p>-Continually assess conditions. cancel / postpone or shorten monitoring day if conditions are (or predicted to be) unsuitable or are changeable making work dangerous.</p> <p>-Avoid visiting your site if the weather is abnormally hot or cold, fog, low light, if there is consistent rain or winds gusting over 40mph.</p> <p>-Never sample at night or twilight.</p> <p>-Wear suitable clothing</p> <p>-Use high SPF suncream and sun hats when warm, extra layers and warm hats when cool.</p>	First Aid Injury	Remote	Low

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bring suitable refreshment for the conditions. Drink before becoming thirsty. -Ensure shade /cover is available if at all possible. -If participants get too hot or cold cut monitoring short and take appropriate action. 			
Anti-social behaviour	Time off Work Injury	Remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All monitoring participants to stay in sight of each other. -Remove selves from any dangerous situations. -Be aware of the nearest emergency services entrance points on site and the nearest hospital. -Stick to open access public rights of way. -Keep an eye out for suspicious people. Call the police if you feel you are in a dangerous situation. -Make space for other users of paths, especially cyclists. Do not block a public path. -Raise awareness to 'mind your backs' in group. -If people approach in a friendly or neutral way, be friendly and open and discuss the project. People are likely to be curious about what you are doing. -If working on land you have written permission for, carry a copy of said permission on your person. 	No Injury	Remote	Low
Roads	Fatal/ Disabling	Occasional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sites should be selected to be safe but if accessing via a road, be cautious of traffic and wear a high visibility vest. -Avoid sampling near fast roads or on roads without footpaths. -Ensure you have a safe parking option if driving. -Never drive (or visit your site) if overly fatigued or unwell. -Ensure your vehicle is in good working order and carry your licence with you. -Always secure (lock) your vehicle. 	No Injury	Negligible	Low
Training	First Aid Injury	Remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Non trained individuals may not participate in the RiverWatch, though they may observe sampling. They must; comply with this guidance, remain at least 2m from the riverbank and not participate in sampling. -All RiverWatch participants to sign to confirm they have received training. 	No Injury	Negligible	Low
Safeguarding	First Aid Injury	Remote	Safeguarding of vulnerable persons is to be assessed on a case by case basis to ensure all needs are met. Where required, the ERH will work with partner and other organisations to meet these needs.	First Aid Injury	Negligible	Low

Essex RiverWatch Dynamic Risk Assessment: TO BE COMPLETED ON THE DAY OF MONITORING

-Monitor conditions on arrival and throughout.

-Some factors you may wish to consider:

- Weather conditions; temperature, visibility, rain etc.
- Current river conditions
- Underfoot conditions
- Your equipment
- Those around you, in your group and others you encounter
- Your health and current condition
- Roads and vehicles

Nearest hospital: _____

Confirm you know how to get to your nearest A&E department

Confirm an ambulance can access your site if needed

Are there any additional risks that have become apparent on the day of your visit? Please describe the risks and your mitigation(s)		
Following dynamic risk assessment:	Is it safe to carry out the monitoring? (yes/no)	Please add today's date
For each volunteer please:	Print name	Sign