



Biosecurity

Westcountry Rivers Trust Biosecurity Protocol

Westcountry Rivers Trust exists to conserve and enhance the rivers and catchments of the South West of England. We do not want to cause any negative impact as a result of our actions and therefore this biosecurity protocol must be followed by all staff, contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers, visitors and any person we take, invite or has access to sites where we work. It is particularly important for persons conducting inter-catchment field work.

This is a protocol to control and minimise any risks of transferring non-native species and pathogens between catchments, water bodies, sites and farms or land owners.

All staff must use rubber soled waders and/or footwear – i.e. not felt.

All teams must ensure they have suitable sterilisation equipment available if they are working in or near water, and if they are moving between sites and land ownership. You are issued with a pump-sprayer and stiff bristled brush for disinfection.

The preferred, and Defra approved, disinfectant for use is FAM 30 at a dilution of 1:20.

Other chemicals may be used, but must be fit for purpose, e.g. Virkon® Aquatic for water-based work and/or Cleankill 'Sanitising Spray' for tree works and forestry (or appropriate alternative). FAM 30 is effective against TB and is therefore to be used as the default biosecurity measure. Either one of these disinfectants, or a combination, must be used at all sites.

Biosecurity measures must be included in the Risk Assessment.

Procedure

Before going to site

Prepare FAM 30 disinfectant before going to site by diluting FAM 30 1:20 parts water. For a 2 litre sprayer, place 100ml of FAM 30 in 2 litres of water. Wear appropriate safety equipment as stated in the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet). Carry the sprayer and brush in your vehicle at all times working in the field.



All equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to use or transfer between sub-catchments to remove any potential disease causing organisms and cross contamination.

For effective disinfection the equipment should be sprayed (or dipped/soaked), scrubbed and allowed to dry completely between sites.

A copy of the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) must be carried and referred to in the event of an emergency. This should be incorporated into your Risk Assessment.

On site

You should inform the land owner or appropriate person/s that you have biosecurity measures.

Ask the land owner representative if there is a designated wash-down area for biosecurity and use this area if possible.

Ask the land owner representative if there are special biosecurity considerations for the site you are visiting, e.g. North American Signal Crayfish or Tuberculosis. FAM 30 is effective against Tuberculosis (TB).

Before/After (or both, as appropriate) conducting work the equipment must be clean and free from possible cross-contamination.

Spraying, rinsing or dipping in disinfectant must take place away from the watercourse and away from any potential direct input to a watercourse.

Sterilise your boots/waders, nets or other equipment that may transfer pathogens by dipping them in or spraying them with disinfectant in the following situations:

- At the start and end of the working day
- When you move between sub catchments
- Any other time you believe there is a risk to biosecurity

If driving through fish farms, farmyards or other areas where a high possibility of transfer exists; vehicle wheels must be sprayed at the exit of the property, or site-specific biosecurity procedures followed.

Dispose of used sterilising solution sensibly, according to manufacturer's instructions and MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet).



After going to site

All equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in readiness for the next user.

Equipment must be thoroughly disinfected and stored in a way that allows drying to take place, or dried fully before being stored..

Any problems arising from site visits or equipment must be reported to your manager and the H&S manager, and the equipment must be clearly marked if not ready to use for its intended purpose.

Biosecurity disinfectant should be checked and topped up if necessary.

This is a protocol to control and minimise the risks of transferring species and pathogens between catchments, water bodies and farms or land owners. This applies to all field work including (but not exhaustive) River walks, Electrofishing, Surveying operations, Farm site visits and any other operations where there is a risk.

For more information or advice ask your manager or health and safety representative.

Hazardous Substances and Diseases

Hazardous Substances

An appropriate assessment must be carried out before a hazardous substance is used. This incorporates any substance with a hazard warning symbol on the label.

Observe COSHH (Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health) instruction labels and manufacturers MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets). The aim is to provide established procedures that, when followed, are adequate to avoid any substance causing harm to people or to the environment.

Trust staff must carry MSDS for harmful chemicals when using them away from the office. All chemicals stored on Trust property must have the MSDS placed in the correct folder on the server for everyone to access and refer. Cited PPE must be used.

In general, when handling substances with a warning, the instructions given on the MSDS and on the product label will be adequate to prevent environmental or personal harm when followed correctly. There are additional regulations for the Control of Pesticides Regulations, covering the use of animal poisons, herbicides, pesticides and timber treatment products. These require people using specified agricultural chemicals to hold a Competence Certificate.



Anyone finding empty containers of agricultural chemicals or poisons should not try to dispose of them themselves. Poachers, particularly when disturbed sometimes leave behind empty containers. The fire and rescue services have the skills and knowledge to deal with containers that may have contained hazardous chemicals and suspicious containers should be reported to the authorities.

Staff must be authorised to purchase hazardous or harmful substances. If staff are authorised to purchase hazardous substances they must request a copy of the manufacturer's Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). The supplier is obligated by statute to supply this information. When new hazardous substances are purchased the MSDS must be placed in the relevant server folder and any primary hazards associated with a substance should be advertised to all staff if appropriate.

There is potential for some hazardous substances to be encountered unknowingly; for example, coming into contact with asbestos during bat roost surveys. It is important to ask all clients if there is potential for any risks to health and assess the risk appropriately. For surveyors with an increased chance of coming into contact with asbestos inadvertently, recognition training should be provided.