

This Health and Safety Guide is for Wychwood Forest Trust volunteers carrying out any activity under WFT supervision.

If you have any urgent questions or concerns please speak to the session leader. For non-urgent queries contact the office:

volunteers@wychwoodforesttrust.co.uk

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 999 or 112

Good health and safety practice will reduce the risks associated with practical fieldwork. It is important to understand that you are also responsible for your own safety and that of those around you. The session leader will advise of any additional site-specific risks.

First Aid

A basic first aid kit will be available at all WFT volunteer sessions.

Medical Conditions

If you know that you have a medical condition which may affect your ability to carry out certain tasks or something that could put others at risk of injury, please inform the session leader. Any such reports will be treated in confidence.

All volunteers doing practical work, especially where there is a risk of skin abrasion or cuts, are advised to be immunised against tetanus. It is your responsibility to ensure your cover is up to date. Please check with your doctors if you are unsure.

Personal Protective Equipment

Safety clothing should be worn when carrying out potentially hazardous work. Your session leader will advise you.

Tools

If you find any defects with tools or equipment during the session, please report it to the session leader.

Insurance

WFT volunteers are covered by the Wychwood Forest Trust Insurance for Public Liability.

Accident Reporting

All accidents should be reported to the session leader for recording.

General Environmental Hazards	
Risk	Precaution
Injury to general Public	Stop working to allow people to pass. Do not leave tools or cut materials where somebody could trip over them.
Slipping or tripping	Keep work area tidy. Wear sturdy footwear. Place tools down carefully to reduce trip hazard. When walking on site, keep an eye out for potholes, tree roots or other obstacles.
Health risks associated with medical conditions or lower fitness levels	Please notify the session leader of any medical conditions which may affect your volunteering. Work at a steady pace and take breaks when you need them.
Dehydration and tiredness	Take appropriate food and drinks when volunteering and take regular breaks. Be aware of your own capabilities, fitness and fatigue levels. Accident risk is much higher when tired.
Extreme weather conditions	Do not work near or under trees in high winds or thunder storm. Dress appropriately for the weather conditions - enough warm layers and waterproofs in cold or wet weather and sun hats in warmer weather. Sun block may also be required.
Injury from dogs, poisonous plants or insect stings	If you come across a dog behaving aggressively, back away slowly. Do not knowingly aggravate an individual insect or nest. Wear long trousers and ideally a long sleeved top when clearing vegetation. Inform the session leader if you are allergic to any stings or plants.
Working near water	
Risk	Precaution
Leptospirosis	When appropriate, all workers to be made aware of symptoms arising from or due to infection. Protect any cuts to the body with a waterproof plaster, and wear water proof gloves if you have cuts on hands.
Equipment and task risks	
Risk	Precaution
Injury from use of hand tools	All tools in use should be in good condition and well maintained, whether self-provided or supplied by WFT. Edge tools should be kept sharp. Remain at least two tool lengths away from swinging tools. Wear eye protection to protect from injury due to flying splinters. Store tools safely in the tool box when not in use. Wear safety gloves unless using swinging tools which are best gripped without gloves. Carry tools at the side of the body with the blade retracted or guarded if available.
Injury from lifting heavy materials or equipment	Don't lift anything which feels too heavy or awkward. Keep back straight and knees bent when lifting. Get a good grip and hold close to your body. It is advisable to wear steel toe-capped boots if working with heavy materials.
Falling from ladder	Inspect ladder before use. Secure the ladder on a flat, solid base. One person to steady the ladder while the other climbs.
Injury from falling branches	Wear a helmet if cutting overhead branches. Before cutting any branch check there is nobody in the area where the branch could fall, and warn others working nearby.
Scratches or injury from plants	Wear trousers and long sleeved tops when clearing vegetation.

Litter and waste clearance risks	
Risk	Precaution
Injury or illness from contact with dangerous materials or objects	Use gloves and/or a litter picker to collect rubbish. Report large amounts of rubbish, or dangerous objects to session leader who will inform the relevant authority to arrange removal.
Corrosive liquids, asbestos, chemicals, needles	Report to session leader who will inform the relevant authority to arrange removal.
Lone working risks	
Risk	Precaution
Lone worker hurt and nobody knows where they are	Don't wander off on your own without somebody in the group knowing where you are. Take your mobile phone with you.