

# British Bat Survey

## Health and Safety for Volunteer Fieldworkers

In everyday life all activities involve hazards, but with sensible precautions you can reduce the risk. At the end of this leaflet is a template risk assessment to help you to assess the hazards that may be present at your survey location, and suggests measures to reduce these risks. Our aim is to help you improve your own personal safety while carrying out surveys of bats in the field. **Please read the whole document before carrying out your field work.** Please remember that as a volunteer you are under no obligation to take part in this survey. You should not put yourself, or others, in danger.

As a National Bat Monitoring Programme volunteer you are covered by BCT's insurance while engaged in survey-related activities. To be able to claim under this insurance you must have

- **Completed a risk assessment.** Guidelines on completing a risk assessment are provided below.
- **Permission from the landowner to carry out the survey**, if the site is on private land. See <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/british-bat-survey/getting-landowner-permission> for tips on getting landowner permission.

In the event of a claim you will need to supply a copy of the completed risk assessment and landowner permission, so please keep a copy safe.

If you have any questions about health and safety please contact [britishbatsurvey@bats.org.uk](mailto:britishbatsurvey@bats.org.uk)

## COVID-19: Important additional guidance for 2020

**Before planning your survey, please ensure you are following the latest government guidance for the country in which you live, and also the survey-specific guidance below:**

- Do not carry out your surveys if you or anyone in your household is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or you have been asked to self-isolate.
- Do not carry out your surveys if you have any concerns about the health and safety of yourself or others, in particular if you have members of your household in a vulnerable category.
- Please liaise with the land owner(s) to ask if they have any concerns about you visiting their land this year, and please respect their wishes.
- Do not use public transport to travel to your survey site.
- Ensure you maintain social distancing with anybody you encounter while travelling to/from the site.

## Reporting injuries

BCT must comply with *The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)*. Please let us know if you or anyone accompanying you

- suffers an injury requiring immediate hospital treatment.
- suffers an injury that results in incapacity for normal work for four or more consecutive days (excluding the day of the injury).

There is no need to report incidents where people are taken to hospital purely as a precaution when no injury is apparent.

## **Under 18s or vulnerable adults**

If you will be accompanied by vulnerable adults or people under 18 please ensure you have read our safeguarding policy <https://www.bats.org.uk/the-trust/policies/safeguarding>. BCT is committed to upholding the principle that children and vulnerable adults are entitled to protection from harm and have the right to a safe, positive and enjoyable environment when involved with BCT.

## **Diseases and medical precautions**

### **Weil's disease (Leptospirosis)**

This is an infection caused by bacteria in water and so is a risk near rivers and lakes if open cuts come into contact with water. Workers should avoid contact with water especially if cut or grazed. If contact with water is made, you should wash the affected area. If you contract flu-like symptoms, you should tell your doctor that you may have been exposed to Weil's disease.

### **Lyme disease**

This is an infectious disease caused by bacteria transmitted via the bite of an infected tick and is commonly (though not always) associated with a 'bull's-eye' rash spreading from the tick bite. If you have spent time in an area known to harbour ticks, you must check and remove ticks as soon as possible. Removal of ticks within the first 24 hours of attachment drastically reduces the chances of acquiring an infection. If a tick is found and you contract flu-like symptoms, you should tell your doctor that you may have been exposed to Lyme disease. Check you know how to remove a tick by visiting this website: <https://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk/about-ticks/tick-removal/>

### **Tetanus (lockjaw)**

Tetanus is a serious but rare infection caused by bacteria found in soil and human/animal waste. It usually occurs when a flesh wound becomes contaminated. Please ensure your tetanus jab is up to date (recommended every 10 years) and that cuts and scratches are covered.

### **Toxocariasis**

Toxocariasis is an infection caused by roundworm parasites. The risk comes from handling soil or sand contaminated with infected animal faeces (most commonly cats, dogs and foxes). If you come into contact with sand, soil, or the faeces of dogs, cats or foxes, ensure you wash your hands with clean water and soap or an antibacterial gel as soon as possible; do not rub your eyes. Most people experience no symptoms with toxocariasis infection, however some have symptoms such as coughs, headaches, stomach pains and/or high temperatures. If you experience any of these symptoms you should inform your doctor that you may have been exposed to toxocariasis.

## British Bat Survey risk assessment

The form below includes a checklist of potential hazards and risk prevention/control methods that may be relevant to a range of different sites surveyed for the British Bat Survey. Please note that the checklist is not exhaustive and is for guidance only, so please assess your site carefully and consider any risks not on the checklist. There are blank rows at the bottom of the table so that additional hazards can be added.

### How to complete a risk assessment:

1. Assess the risks for your survey location. Each site is unique so please consider the risks carefully. If any risks are not included in the checklist add them to the blank rows at the bottom of the form, assess their severity, probability and risk level (severity x probability) using the scoring guidance below. List relevant risk prevention/control measures.
2. The shaded columns show the severity of the risk, the probability that the risk will occur and the risk level (severity x probability) in the **absence of risk prevention or control measures**.
3. Complete the last four columns of the form. Indicate whether the risk is relevant to your site (Y/N), and score the severity, probability and the risk level (severity x probability) **adjusted to take into account the risk prevention/control measures identified**, using the scoring guidance below. The first row has been completed for you as an example.
4. Ideally the adjusted risk level should be no higher than 3. If it is higher please contact us to discuss ([britishbatsurvey@bats.org.uk](mailto:britishbatsurvey@bats.org.uk)).
5. You should review your assessment before every survey to identify any new hazards

### Scoring guidelines:

#### Severity

1 - Would result in minor injury or discomfort

2 - Would hinder you from carrying out daily activities, but would not require immediate hospital treatment

3 - Would require immediate hospital treatment

#### Probability

1 - Low

2 - Medium

3 – High

Survey point name	Date of risk assessment	Person carrying out assessment

Hazard	Nature of risk	Assessment in the absence of risk control measures			Risk control measures	Relevant to your site?	Assessment adjusted to take account of risk control measures		
		Severity	Probability	Risk level			Adjusted severity	Adjusted probability	Adjusted risk level
Uneven ground, obstacles, cliffs and banks.	Trips, slips, falls and other injuries	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact relevant landowners before carrying out a survey to find out about hazardous areas.</li> <li>Wear suitable footwear for the terrain.</li> <li>Avoid climbing fences/gates where possible</li> <li>Avoid dense vegetation where possible.</li> <li>Carry first aid kit</li> </ul>	Y	3	1	3
Falls from height	Injury or death	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep safe distance from banks/cliffs/quarries/ravines</li> </ul>				
Cuts and scratches	Infection	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring antiseptic wipes and plasters</li> <li>Ensure tetanus jab is up to date</li> <li>Avoid contact with water if cut or grazed (see above for information on Weil's Disease).</li> <li>Be aware of hazards on site such as barbed wire.</li> </ul>				
Working near water	Drowning, exposure, disease	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep safe distance from water edge</li> <li>Do not cross rivers unless by bridge</li> <li>Avoid work when there is a risk of flooding.</li> <li>If your site is coastal be aware of tides by checking the time of the high tide to avoid risk of becoming trapped by rising water.</li> <li>Use good hygiene practices, take hand sanitising gel and wash hands before eating or drinking</li> </ul>				

Hazard	Nature of risk	Assessment in the absence of risk control measures			Risk control measures	Relevant to your site?	Assessment adjusted to take account of risk control measures		
		Severity	Probability	Risk level			Adjusted severity	Adjusted probability	Adjusted risk level
Getting lost	Exposure, dehydration	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring relevant maps, compass and GPS if available.</li> <li>Stay on paths where possible.</li> <li>Notify someone of destination (grid reference) and expected time back/agree contingency procedure</li> <li>Bring a fully charged mobile phone.</li> </ul>				
Severe bad weather	Exposure, dehydration, sunburn.	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check weather forecast on day and postpone if bad weather forecast.</li> <li>Wear appropriate clothing for the weather.</li> <li>Wear sun lotion and hat if required</li> <li>Carry water.</li> <li>Carry extra layers and waterproofs in case of unexpected bad weather.</li> </ul>				
Contact with animals	Attack, infection or other injury	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk to landowners about location of potentially hazardous animals</li> <li>Avoid contact with animals and dung.</li> </ul>				
Road traffic and railway lines	Collision	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear hi-vis jacket when walking on roads</li> <li>Do not cross railway lines</li> </ul>				

Hazard	Nature of risk	Assessment in the absence of risk control measures			Risk control measures	Relevant to your site?	Assessment adjusted to take account of risk control measures		
		Severity	Probability	Risk level			Adjusted severity	Adjusted probability	Adjusted risk level
Risks from other people	Personal attack	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have landowner permission to carry out the survey.</li> <li>• Inform landowner and anyone likely to be present on the site in advance of the survey.</li> <li>• Ask landowners about unsafe places/ known trouble spots</li> <li>• Abandon the survey if you feel threatened by presence of other people</li> <li>• Keep valuables inconspicuous</li> </ul>				
Risks from other people	Exposure to or transmission of COVID-19	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the latest government guidance for the country in which you live.</li> <li>• Do not carry out the survey if you or anyone in your household is showing symptoms of COVID-19, or if you have been asked to self-isolate.</li> <li>• Do not carry out the survey if you have any concerns about the health and safety of yourself or others, in particular if you have members of your household in a vulnerable category.</li> <li>• Please liaise with the land owner(s) to ask if they have any concerns about you visiting their land this year, and please respect their wishes.</li> <li>• Do not use public transport to travel to your survey site.</li> <li>• Ensure you maintain social distancing with anybody you encounter while travelling to/from the site.</li> <li>• Follow recommendations on personal hygiene and PPE.</li> </ul>				

