



Assisting the Police – Insurance Cover

From time to time bat workers are asked to assist the police with their investigations into allegations of bat crime. The purpose of such visits being to assist investigating officers in the identification and gathering of evidence that might later be used in criminal proceedings. We have recently been asked what, if any, insurance might be available to bat workers who undertake such visits.

BCT administer, on behalf of Natural England (NE), a voluntary roost visitor scheme. NE have agreed that where registered Volunteer Bat Roost Visitors (VBRV's) undertake visits for the purposes of assisting the police then the insurance provided by their roost visitor scheme will be available. However, this insurance cover only extends to those who are registered with NE and active as VBRV's. It is assumed that VBRV's who undertake such work will provide evidence of their findings and will support the police and the Crown Prosecution Service where it is decided to take matters further. Prior to any visits being undertaken, BCT, as NE's contractor, must be made aware of intentions.

Not all licensed bat workers are VBRV's, but some are asked by police officers to undertake visits to investigate allegations of offences against bats. The NE insurance provided to VBRV's will not be available under such circumstances. That said BCT have public liability insurance which extends to both partner and network bat groups who are undertaking bat conservation activities (where groups have not opted out of BCT's insurance cover). Our insurance company tell us that they accept that visits undertaken at the request of the police will fall within that definition.

The BCT insurance will not cover all situations but it does include circumstances where an individual is injured (for which BCT could be deemed to be liable), or should they cause damage (again for which BCT could be deemed to be liable). It does not provide cover for personal injury nor for damage to personal property. There is no requirement, under this insurance, for BCT to be made aware of visits but bat workers must be acting on behalf of a partner or network group with the knowledge of that group and a risk assessment be completed (this can be a dynamic assessment at the time of the site visit).

In order that BCT can provide as detailed a view of levels of bat crime as possible, our Investigations Officer should be made aware of any visits undertaken in support of the police via investigations@bats.org.uk.