**Beachwatch River Clean Risk Assessment**

**IMPORTANT:** this risk assessment has been developed to include the most likely risks associated with the river environment and the activity of river cleaning with your group. Due to the changing nature of this environment and variations between risks at different locations, you must adapt this document to suit the location of your event and make note of any additional risks present on the day. There are blank lines available to add risks specific to your event. You must sign to indicate that you have done this and keep a copy of this document. NEVER place yourself or others in the position of risk.

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| **River name and event date:** | **Risk Assessment checked on day of clean by:** |
| **Risk Assessment completed by**: | **Date Risk Assessment checked:** |
| **High tide if applicable:** use for quick search -<https://www.visitmyharbour.com/> | **Low tide if applicable:** |
| Date of Risk Assessment: | I confirm the Risk Assessment is accurate and has been updated as required.  Signed: |

***Essential for event and RA:*** *First aid kit, container for glass, \*****sharps box,*** *hand sanitiser, strong gloves, (face mask if you would like to wear one)*

***Who has the First Aid Kit/Is a First aider:***

***Phone reception: Excellent / Good / Poor*** (delete as appropriate) Check phone reception on arrival. Check with other adults and if no one has reception, identify the quickest route to a phone – may be a phone box nearby or go into a shop/cafe/kiosk and set up in advance just in case. This is an important stage of the risk assessment as the ability to contact emergency services is required to mitigate many of the identified risks.

***Where is the nearest hospital:*** *search England –* [*https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Accident-and-emergency-services/LocationSearch/428*](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Accident-and-emergency-services/LocationSearch/428)

***Where is the nearest hospital:*** *search Scotland -* <https://www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/aes-and-minor-injuries-units>

***Where is the nearest hospital:*** *search Wales -*  <https://aeinfo.nhs.wales/>

***Where is the nearest defibrillator:*** Search - [http://www.heartsafe.org.uk/aed-locations](about:blank)

***Where is the nearest hospital:*** *search Northern Ireland -* <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/maps/>

***Coastguard & Emergency Services:*** - Call 999

***Contact for dead/injured alive animals: -***  If you find a live marine mammal that is injured call BDMLR on 01825 765546. If you find any other live but injured animal call RSPCA on 0300 1234999.

## In Scotland please call Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - 03000 999 999

**Section 1 – Identify who might be at risk (please circle)**

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| MCS Volunteers | Teachers/Group leaders | Young People | Parents/Helpers | Members of the public |
| Other (please state) | | | | |

**Section 2 – Identify who is responsible for applying this risk assessment (please circle)**

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| MCS Volunteer organiser | Teachers/Group leaders | Other (please state) |  |

**Section 3 – Identify Hazards**

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| **1** | Lack of understanding of the event site, or knowing what to do if something occurs. |  | **8** | Sharp or heavy litter |  | **15** | Safeguarding – special provisions for welcoming children and young people |  |
| **2** | Transmission of coronavirus (Covid-19) |  | **9** | Hazardous waste (dog faeces, sewage, needles, Weil’s Disease, containers) |  | **16** | Aggressive dogs |  |
| **3** | Lifting and carrying heavy items |  | **10** | Fly tipped waste |  | **17** | Lone Working |  |
| **4** | Tides/currents |  | **11** | Unexploded ordnance |  | **18** | VIP’s in attendance or contentious issues/event expected |  |
| **5** | Slips, Trips & Falls, including features of the environment (for example, steep banks rocks, mud, locks, tunnels, narrow paths) |  | **12** | Animals (dead/alive); |  | **19** | Avian Bird Flu |  |
| **6** | Roads and slipways |  | **13** | First aid required |  | **20** |  |  |
| **7** | Weather conditions (Heat and Cold) |  | **14** | Member of the public becoming involved with the event |  | **21** |  |  |

**Section 4 – Risk Controls**

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| **Hazard No.** | **Description of Hazard** | **Measures to manage the risk that the hazard could have.**  **Ensure that you are satisfied that the measures effectively control the risk to the minimum possible level.**  **Where risks cannot be reduced sufficiently, consider that the event cannot run** | **Who is responsible for implementing the controls, and when?** |
| 1 | Lack of understanding of the event site, or knowing what to do if something occurs. | Prior to the litter-pick taking place, River Clean Organiser provides a briefing and safety talk, covering:   * risks and general information about correct use of the equipment * the requirement to clean hands frequently with soap, or sanitiser * particular features of the chosen area for cleaning (like banks, narrow paths etc) * risks from hazardous waste and the need to avoid touching with hands/gloves * who to contact if an accident occurs * where and when to meet if the group becomes separated * any issues that have become more hazardous (for example, due to the weather on the day, other events on the river, increased traffic, overcrowding/ability to maintain social distancing etc). | River Clean Organiser in advance of the event and in the briefing on the day.  Organiser can call the event to a close if behaviour is putting others at risk, or for any other hazards and risks that appear |
| 2 | Covid / Respiratory infections | As we learn to live safely with coronavirus (COVID-19), there are actions we can all take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and other respiratory infections and passing it on to others. These actions will also help to reduce the spread of other respiratory infections such as flu.  **What to do if you have symptoms of a respiratory infection:**  **Do not attend if:**   * **If You’ve Tested Positive for COVID-19,** be aware that you can be infectious to others for anything up to 10 days after initial infection * **If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection**, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities * If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or are waiting for the results from a PCR test. * Participants must be advised to bring along their own gloves, always wear them, and use litter pickers if they are available. * Follow good hygiene practices for handwashing, sneezing, coughing and although face mask wearing is no longer required, we respect some people may continue to wear them.   Any litter picking equipment given out to Participants must be cleaned before and after use with a household disinfectant. | River Clean Organiser  Part of the health and safety briefing at the start of the event. |
| 3 | Lifting and carrying heavy items | Volunteers instructed not to over-fill bags or try to carry heavy items.  Volunteers advised to be aware of their own limitations by the event organiser during the briefing and not lift heavy items found during the clean up  Volunteers with pre-existing injuries are not to lift bags or heavy items  No more than one bag at a time to be carried  Young people are always supervised by a parent or guardian.  Only organisers/volunteers trained in safe manual handling procedures should offer guidance for safe lifting practices and reducing/removing common hazards and risks (reducing load weight, postural advice when lifting, handling asymmetrical loads, grip, other environmental factors, carry distance, obstacles en-route).  Volunteers advised on safe manual handling practices.  If too heavy to handle, leave the object in place and report it to the organiser to arrange removal by the council. | River Clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event.  River Clean Organiser monitors during the clean.  River Clean Organiser to inform the Council/River Owner for removal of waste |
| 4 | Tides/currents | If on a foreshore then the tide times will be checked, and timing of event planned to ensure the sea will not be too close to participants.  Volunteers advised to stay away from water’s edge, not to enter the water  Volunteers advised of tidal times and not to go to areas of the foreshore that could be cut-off.  Special consideration of risks from the water for young people in the group – to be supervised at all times. | River Clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event.  River Clean Organiser monitors and cancels event if water conditions threaten volunteer safety. |
| 5 | Slips, Trips & Falls, including features of the environment (for example, steep banks rocks, mud.  Locks  Tunnels  Narrow paths | Event organiser to choose a location with minimal hazard to the participants. Volunteers advised of any hazardous areas and informed that these are to be avoided.  Volunteers advised to wear supportive, slip resistant footwear and no open toed shoes.  Volunteers advised to take care when negotiating steps, on overgrown areas, rocky areas or wet/muddy ground.  Volunteers instructed to take extra care when carrying heavy bags and not carry them for long distances.  If in doubt, don’t carry on if an area looks or becomes slippery or dangerous.  Volunteers advised to stay away from steep banks and any visible landslips.  Ensure children and young adults are supervised, particularly at locks where there is a risk of falling in.  Note if buoyancy aids/life rings are available in the area of your route - choose locations that have them where possible.  If someone falls in Call 999. Shout that help is on its way. Encourage them to float on their back. If being carried with water flow try to stay ahead of them. Use a life ring or a long branch if possible and safe to do so, and doesn't put you at risk of falling in. | Event organiser to include particular features and cautions applicable to the cleaning site in the briefing and the conditions on the day.  Monitor activity during the event.  Event organiser to cancel event if weather is sufficiently extreme. |
| 6 | Roads | Prior to event, organiser to advise participants of any requirement to cross roads  Children to remain under supervision and in sight of a responsible adult at all times, preferably by a parent or guardian.  All volunteers advised not to work on roads or roadside verges  No litter picking near railway lines or bridges. | River Clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event. |
| 7 | Weather conditions:  **Heat:**  Sunstroke, sunburn  Dehydration, heat exhaustion  **Cold/Wind/Rain:**  Hypothermia | * **River clean organiser to:**   + Be aware of the predicted weather conditions in the lead up to the event and assess if the event can go ahead. Reschedule event to time when conditions are improved.   + Shorten the event duration due to the conditions or to end the event if the weather changes, or the location becomes unsafe. * **Hot weather:**   + Take regular breaks and seek shade if necessary.   + Have access to water and advised to drink plenty.   + Apply sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) as directed on the tube / pump bottle. Reapplying every 2 hours is recommended.   + Encourage the removal of personal protective equipment (gloves, shoes & tabard) when resting to help encourage heat loss (don't forget to put them back on when you resume)   + Wear clothes and sunglasses that provide sun protection, such as:     - A wide brimmed hat that shades the neck and ears     - A long-sleeved top     - Trousers or long skirt in close-weave fabric that do not allow sunlight through     - Sunglasses with wrap around or wide arms with the CE Mark and British Standard mark 12312-1:2013 E * Be aware of [heat exhaustion and heat stroke](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/) and how to look after them. If in doubt seek medical attention * **Fires**- consider risks of fire during dry summer period and no open fires or BBQ’s if risk of combustion with vegetation or other combustible material. * **Cold / wet weather**: Wear appropriate clothing. Be aware of [hypothermia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hypothermia/) and how to look after them. If in doubt seek medical attention * **Unstable, steep ground:** avoid areas where debris could come loose, i.e., trees, poorly maintained structures in high winds * **Lightning:** cease using litter pickers and stop the event. Be aware of objects that can conduct or attract lightning, for example, litter pickers, gazebo poles, anything. If you have a metal object that is not necessary for your safety, put it aside.   + **30/30 rule:** if the flash to bang is 30 seconds in length or less you should seek shelter. Staying inside this shelter is advised until 30 minutes past the last clap of thunder. This ensures that any distant strikes at the beginning of the storm (lightning can travel up to 10 miles), or trailing storm clouds at the back of the storm do not take anyone by surprise. * **Seeking shelter from lightning**   + Ideally, seek shelter inside a large building or a motor vehicle keeping away from, and getting out of wide, open spaces and exposed hilltops.   + If you are exposed to the elements with nowhere to shelter, make yourself as small a target as possible by crouching down with your feet together, hands on knees and your head tucked in. This technique keeps as much of you off the ground as possible.   + Do not shelter beneath tall or isolated trees, it has been estimated that one in four people struck by lightning are sheltering under trees.   + If you are on / near water, move away as quickly as possible as water will transmit strikes from further away. | River Clean Organiser to assess the conditions on the day, and monitor during the event.  Event organiser to cancel event if weather is sufficiently extreme |
| 8 | Sharp or heavy litter | Overall message is ‘if in doubt, don’t touch’.  Volunteers advised to wear sturdy gardening type gloves at all times, to use a litter picker in preference to hands, and never pick handfuls of litter as broken glass and sharp items may be hidden inside.  Glass and sharp items not to be put loose in a collecting bag. Collect glass in a separate container or bucket, and at the end of the clean, put into an appropriate recycling bin if one is available. Participants instructed to wrapped up securely, or in a sealable container which can be put in the waste bag at the end of the clean for safe removal.  Bags not to be overfilled and made difficult to carry,  Heavy or partially buried items should be left and the land owner informed to arrange collection. | River Clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event  River Clean Organiser to ensure a suitable container is provided for collecting sharp items. |
| 9 | Hazardous waste:  Dog faeces  Sewage related items  Suspicious containers  Needles/medical waste  Weil’s Disease | **Overall message is ‘if in doubt, don’t touch****’.** Rivers can contain a variety of unpleasant and hazardous materials that can pose a risk to human health. Children should be supervised at all times and instructed to ask for help with hazardous waste.  **Always wear sturdy gardening type gloves,** **or use a litter picker in preference to hands, and never pick handfuls of litter as broken glass, metal, syringes, and other sharp items may be hidden inside.**  River clean organiser to check with the council/landowner about their approach to collecting used PPE when they are arranging for waste collection.  Glass and sharp items must not to be put loose in a collecting bag.   * + Collect glass in a separate container or bucket, and at the end of the clean, put into an appropriate recycling bin if one is available.   + Wrap the item securely, or in a sealable container which can be put in the waste bag at the end of the clean for safe removal * Collect **bagged dog faeces** with litter pickers if possible or only with gloves on. Unbagged dog faeces should be left - clean footwear if waste is stepped in. * **Sewage related items** to be collected using litter pickers if possible – or only with gloves on. * **Never approach suspicious looking containers** with or without hazard warning sign and any suspicious drums, materials, barrels to be left untouched and Environment Agency Pollution Hotline to be contacted (Tel 0800 7312453) Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Tel 0800 80 70 60), Natural Resources Wales (Tel 0300 065 3000), Northern Ireland Environment Agency (Tel 0845 302 0008) * **Do not to touch oil/tar/chemicals** found but to report to event leader; if considered appropriate the relevant agency will be informed. (Agencies = Environment Agency (England); Natural Resources Wales; Scottish Environment Protection Agency; Northern Ireland Environment Agency). * **Syringes**   + Syringes and needles must be left where they are and never put in collection bags.   + The river clean organiser should be alerted immediately and advise all participants to keep away from the area.   + The land owner should be notified to collect and dispose of the syringe.   + For councils owned land you can use the following link https://www.gov.uk/report-syringes and leave information on the location of the syringe. * First aid and treatment   + Any piercing injury by a syringe should be immediately treated at medical practice or A&E   + All participants should be advised to seek medical advice if they become ill in the weeks following the event and to ensure they inform medical staff that they took part in a river clean. * Participants to pay particular attention to hand washing/using sanitiser to reduce the risk of infection. Wear gloves and keep them sanitised throughout the day. Cover all existing wounds on hands with dressings and consider wearing a thin pair of extra gloves under the work gloves.   The risk of Weil’s disease will be outlined in the H&S briefing at the start of the event. Volunteers must keep hands/gloves clean, use clean water to rinse if available, wash hands or use sanitiser. Ensure that all volunteers have cuts and grazes covered and all must be wearing gloves.  Participants to pay particular attention to hand washing/using sanitiser to reduce the risk of infection. Wear gloves and keep them sanitised throughout the day. Cover all existing wounds on hands with dressings or Nitrile gloves under work gloves.  All volunteers should be advised to seek medical advice if they become ill in the weeks following the event and to ensure they inform medical staff that they took part in a river clean. | River Clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event  River Clean Organiser to contact Environment Agency Pollution Hotline to be contacted (Tel 0800 7312453) Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Tel 0800 80 70 60), Natural Resources Wales (Tel 0300 065 3000), Northern Ireland Environment Agency (Tel 0845 302 0008) with any suspicious or hazardous containers are found. |
| 10 | Fly tipped waste | If there is an accumulation of waste which would obviously have been fly-tipped deliberately on site, then this should be left alone and the relevant local authority with responsibility for fly- tipping clearance informed.  It is possible that asbestos could be found amongst smaller accumulations of litter that may not appear to be fly tipping. A simple asbestos ID chart can be found on the HSE website here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/gallery.htm> | River Clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event. |
| 11 | Unexploded ordnance | Health and safety briefing at the start of the event will highlight the hazard of unexploded ordnances. Participants advised not to touch and/or approach suspected unexploded ordnance, but to immediately inform the event leader.  Event leader to stop all activity and participants moved a safe distance away from the unexploded ordnance.  Event leader to immediately notify Emergency Services/999 and establish a safe cordon around the device. | River Clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event |
| 12 | Animals (dead/alive) | Included in Health and safety briefing at start of event - dead animals are to be reported to relevant agency for removal.  Participants instructed not to touch but immediately inform event leader (see Weil’s Disease above).  Remain safe distance from animal. | River clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event |
| 13 | First aid required | River Clean Organisers advised to have a first aid kit available and to let participants know how to access it.  It is recommended that all clean-up hosts are First Aid trained  Event organiser to have mobile phone in case of emergency and call 999 if help is needed.  Before each litter pick takes place, organiser updates and keeps a copy of details of local walk in centres and accident & emergency departments  Organiser to replace used first aid items immediately after event, check kit before every event and undertake formal inventory on a quarterly basis | River clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event |
| 14 | Member of the public becoming involved with the event | River clean Organiser to monitor the event closely and ensure that they are known as the point of contact/discussion with any members of the public.  Conflict can occur with recreational or competition anglers, moored boats, groups of people socialising/picnicking.  Interested members of the public can be directed to the Beachwatch website to find suitable cleans to get involved with.  If a confrontation occurs move the group away and if it persists, contact the police.  We do not recommend that you approach members of the public to challenge inappropriate behaviour such as dog fouling or littering. If you do, please be polite and respectful.  Do not trespass onto private property whilst litter picking. | River clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event |
| 15 | Safeguarding – special provisions for welcoming children and young people at an event  Lost child | Rivers are great environments for young people to enjoy, however, there are many distractions, and hazards that will need supervising at all times.  Young people remain the duty of care of their parent or guardian at all times.  Keep all young people in sight at all times – no wandering off to explore.  Keep all young people away from the water.  If you are a school or children's group leading a clean, be sure to work in small groups directly supervised by an adult helper. The size of group will depend on your particular group and location.  On report of a missing child, the River clean Organiser must identify when they were last seen and where, if possible. If child is still not located after contacting other members of the group, a widespread search of the river bank should be conducted.  If they are still not located, the police should be contacted on 999 | River clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event. |
| 16 | Aggressive dogs | Volunteers advised of the threat of aggressive dogs and to not approach any unknown dog.  Dog Walkers in vicinity to be advised by group leader of the litter pick and to keep dogs under control  Children to remain under adult supervision and within sight of adults at all times  Adopt recommended posture if confronted by a dog – do not look in eyes, look down, do not run, pull limbs into body. Retreat slowly  Visit A&E if bitten or attacked  Report attack to the Police and refer to the government guidance on controlling dogs in pubic if you feel this is necessary: <https://www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/report-a-dog> | River clean Organiser informs as part of the H&S briefing at the start of the event. |
| 17 | Lone Working | Let someone know where you are going to be and what time they should be back. Have a little check in, during the day if it's going to be a few hours. Consider location sharing on your phone. | River Clean Organiser |

Put any additional risks that are relevant to the location and group of people attending

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| **Hazard No.** | **Description of Hazard** | **Measures to manage the risk that the hazard could have.**  **Ensure that you are satisfied that the measures effectively control the risk to the minimum possible.**  **Where risks cannot be reduced sufficiently, consider that the event cannot run.** | **Who is responsible, and when?** |
| 18 | Events with VIPs, Ministers, contentious issues – possibly attracting opposition or other campaign groups and publicity. | Depending on the event, a member of the MCS Staff Team may be in attendance and will be responsible for managing the VIP/Minister with a separate colleague(s) handling press and monitoring for disruption. The MCS representatives will take responsibility for halting the event in line with the contingency plans and any extra safety considerations based on the nature of the event.  No person is to be left alone, or become separated from the group without an appropriate plan to ensure their safety.  Whether MCS Staff Team are attending or not, if there is a VIP visitor to an event, they will brief the River Clean Organiser in advance to outline the purpose and messages and advise on any confidentiality issues and press/social media embargoes. They will also support on any contingency plans to update this risk assessment. | MCS Lead Representative inform the River Clean Organiser prior to the event and include any instructions for the briefing at the start of the event. |
| 19 | Avian Bird Flu | **Current status – At risk**   * Do not touch any sick or dead birds. * Do not work in areas where birds congregate; nesting, feeding, roosting sites etc., where exposure to contaminated materials is more likely. * Staff & Participants should continue to follow good hygiene procedures, such as regular and thorough handwashing. * If you find an injured or sick animal call; England & Wales, the RSPCA- 0300 1234999 Scotland, the SPCA - 03000 999 999 Northern Ireland, the USPCA - 028 3025 1000. * If you find dead birds or +5 of any other species in one place, please report them to Defra on 03459 335577 or in NI to DAERA on 0300 200 7840. * **For the latest information** [**https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#latest-situation**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#latest-situation) |  |
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