

Beachwatch Risk Assessment Guidelines



- ❑ Please read these guidelines before carrying out your risk assessment.
- ❑ A copy of your completed risk assessment must be returned to MCS with your Beachwatch registration forms.

Volunteers carry out the clean-up and survey at their own risk, but by completing a risk assessment you will be ensuring that all of your volunteers are aware of any potential hazards on the beach and will be able to take precautionary measures against them.

This form is intended to help organisers assess the risks at the stretch of beach you and your volunteers are surveying. Don't worry if you have had no training or previous experience – if you can organise a beach clean-up and litter survey you can do this!

- ❑ A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what could cause harm to volunteers during a survey. The aim is to ensure that reasonable care has been given to the likelihood of anyone getting hurt or becoming ill during your event.
- ❑ Don't be put off by some of the words you will find:
 - 'Hazard' means anything that can cause harm e.g. broken glass/ bad weather.
 - 'Risk' is the chance, great or small, that someone will be harmed by the hazard.
- ❑ The important thing to decide is whether a hazard is a significant one and whether you have reduced it by taking satisfactory precautions so that the risk is minimised. For example, broken glass on a beach can cut unprotected hands and feet, but the risk of it doing so is remote if volunteers are wearing sturdy footwear and suitable protective gloves during the clean-up.
- ❑ Keep it simple. In most cases the hazards are identified by common sense and checking them is essential to ensure the safety of you and your volunteers.

Five easy steps to risk assessment:

STEP 1 LOOK FOR HAZARDS

Think about where volunteers will be before, during and after the survey – consider access to the beach and the survey area, and identify anything that could reasonably be expected to cause harm. This could be an existing physical feature such as a loose cliff, exposed mudflats at low tide, or sharp objects such as glass found during the clean-up.

STEP 2 DECIDE WHO MIGHT BE HARMED, AND HOW

You, the organiser, and the volunteers taking part in the survey will be at greatest risk from any hazard. You should also consider the capabilities of your volunteers as well as people who are not part of the clean-up and whether they may be harmed by any activities, such as leaving bags of rubbish on access paths.

STEP 3 EVALUATE THE RISKS ARISING FROM THE HAZARDS AND DECIDE WHETHER EXISTING PRECAUTIONS ARE ADEQUATE OR IF MORE SHOULD BE DONE

- ❑ Decide for each significant hazard whether the risk associated with this hazard is high, medium or low, and determine what steps can be taken to (a) remove the risk, or (b) control the risk, so that harm is unlikely.
- ❑ By taking suitable precautionary measures for all reasonably foreseeable hazards you have minimised the risk of harm to yourself and your volunteers.

STEP 4 RECORD YOUR FINDINGS AND BRIEF YOUR VOLUNTEERS AND PARENTS OF THOSE UNDER 18

Write down the significant findings of your assessment on the form overleaf - this means writing down the more significant hazards and recording your most important conclusions e.g. telling volunteers to keep away from an unstable cliff area.

STEP 5 REVIEW YOUR ASSESSMENT

If you take part in regular litter surveys at your beach you will have a good idea of the hazards that already exist. Make the risk assessment and recording part of each survey – this way you will be sure to identify any new hazards.

Risk Assessment Form



- ❑ Please read the guidelines overleaf before carrying out your risk assessment.
- ❑ Please call the Marine Conservation Society on 01989 567807 if you are particularly worried about anything you record during your assessment.
- ❑ Please return a copy of this form online at: www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch, post to MCS, Unit 3, Wolf Business Park, Alton Road, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5NB or fax to 01989 567815.

*This is essential information

Beach name*

Organiser's name*

Risk assessment carried out by*

Assessment date*

Beach Hazards*

Look out for hazards which you could reasonably expect to cause harm during your clean-up. Examples: Strong tides, dangerous cliffs, slippery rocks or surfaces, lifting, mudflats, sharp objects, hazardous substances, sunburn/exposure.
List here - continue on an additional sheet if necessary

Who might be at risk?*

There is no need to list individuals by name - just think about the groups of people the clean will affect. Examples: Organisers, volunteers, young volunteers, council workers, members of the public, user groups/clubs, wildlife.
List here - continue on an additional sheet if necessary

Is the risk adequately controlled?*

What precautions are already in place for the hazards you listed? Do the precautions reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable? Examples: Volunteers are briefed on hazards, areas to avoid, tide times are observed, appropriate protective clothing is worn, manual handling of the litter collected is kept to manageable levels.
List here - continue on an additional sheet if necessary

What further action is necessary to control the risk?*

What more could you reasonably do to avoid those risks that you found were not adequately controlled? Examples: Advise volunteers against contact with the hazard, take a less risky option; issue protective personal equipment or obtain non-contact tools such as litter pickers.
List here - continue on an additional sheet if necessary