

Working outdoors

Always wear sturdy footwear and sufficient clothing to keep warm and dry according to current and forecast weather conditions. We recommend you bring bottled water or other drinks with you; and extra if working in hot weather to avoid the risk of heat exhaustion. You may want to wear a sun hat, sunscreen and keep covered with light clothing, particularly when working on sites with little shade, even on cloudy days.

Take extra care when walking around outdoors— the ground may be uneven and you may slip or trip on hidden obstacles, such as mud, loose stones, tree stumps, divots or rabbit burrows. Be particularly careful when working on slopes. Avoid walking on slopes immediately above a fire or other people, and never allow cut branches, tools or dislodged stones to slide or roll unattended down a slope.

Working in or near water

Life jackets will be provided and must be worn when working over or around deep water. Always have someone else with you, even if working in shallow water and make sure that you know where any rescue equipment is located and how to use it.

Working with hand tools

You will be shown the correct way of handling, carrying and using hand tools before you start work, but a few useful points are listed below:

- If you are still unsure how to use a tool after you have been shown, ask your supervisor for another demonstration.
- Use the correct tool for the job.
- Do not use damaged or worn tools.
- Keep your hands behind the cutting edge when using a sharp tool.
- Keep a safe working distance from other people when using hand tools such as pickaxes, mattocks, slashers or bill-hooks.
- Never leave tools in a position where they could injure someone.



Health hazards

Before work starts, tell your supervisor if you are on any medication, have an injury or have any existing medical conditions. When working outdoors there is a small risk of contracting infections or diseases; getting stung or bitten; or having allergic reactions. If any of these occur on site tell your supervisor immediately. If symptoms develop afterwards and you are concerned seek medical help, and then let your supervisor know. All cuts and grazes should be covered before work starts or immediately after they occur. Wear gloves and don't forget to wash your hands in clean water before eating, drinking or smoking.

Tetanus is usually caused when cuts become infected through contact with soil or sewage. Symptoms include muscle spasms and stiffness, often in the jaw. Always clean and cover cuts and grazes, however small.

Weil's disease or **Leptospirosis** is rare and is spread by animals (especially rats). Symptoms are similar to flu, so if you become unwell shortly after working outdoors tell your doctor what you have been doing. Wearing gloves and good hand hygiene is the best way to prevent infection.

Lyme disease is spread by infected ticks. The earliest and most common symptom is a red circular rash that develops around the area of the bite. Later symptoms are similar to flu. Left untreated Lyme disease can be very serious. If you experience symptoms tell your doctor that you may have been bitten by a tick. When working outdoors wear a long-sleeved shirt, tuck your trousers into your socks, use insect repellent, and check yourself for ticks when undressing.

Toxocariasis is caused by roundworm parasites in animal faeces, especially dogs, cats and foxes. Symptoms include a cough, headaches and stomach pain. Left untreated toxocariasis can be very serious, so speak to your doctor if you become unwell after working outdoors. Keep checking for faeces (especially if dogs or foxes are known to use the area), wear gloves and always wash your hands, avoid rubbing your eyes, and check your boots when you have finished. When litter picking always use a litter picker and be careful when handling 'doggy bags'.

Some **plants** are poisonous, have thorns or stings, or sap which might cause allergic reactions. Do not eat any plants, berries or fruit unless you have been told they are safe. Avoid skin contact with plants by wearing gloves and long sleeves.

Remember– have fun and keep safe!



Working Safely

on outdoor conservation tasks



We want to keep you safe

Working safely with the National Trust requires the same common sense you would use when doing jobs at home. However, we can reassure you that when you work with us, the risks associated with each task and the places where you work will have been assessed. Before each task you will be given information on the significant risks and how we will keep you safe. This may happen during your induction or in a site safety talk and will always include what to do in an emergency. It is important that you follow the instructions given and if you have any questions or wish to see the risk assessment please ask your supervisor. Some activities such as working at height, working with machinery, and lone working involve additional risks and should only be carried out when safe working procedures have been put in place by your supervisor.

We all share the responsibility for keeping ourselves, those working around us, and our visitors safe. So, if you see a problem or "an accident waiting to happen" then stop, warn people and tell your supervisor straight away.



What to do in an emergency

Occasionally

emergency situations arise, even on the best planned tasks. You will be informed what to do and who to contact by your supervisor. Most work parties will include a nominated first aider or one who will be contactable nearby; you will be told who they are. If someone is injured or is taken ill tell your supervisor and/or first aider straight away. We provide first aid kits; make sure you know where they are kept.

Lifting and carrying

Lifting and carrying loads incorrectly can cause serious injury. This also includes pushing, pulling and dragging. If relevant, you will be shown safe handling techniques during your induction and during site safety talks. A basic Manual Handling e-learning module is available – ask your supervisor. Whenever possible avoid lifting or handling loads altogether. If mechanical devices or tools are provided, use them as instructed. If you have to lift or move a load, always take the following precautions:

1. Assess the load: How heavy is it? Can you get a good grip?
2. Ask if you think you need help or equipment, such as sack trucks or wheel barrows.
3. Plan your route before moving and allow adequate rest points.
4. Take suitable precautions if the load has splinters, sharp projections, uneven weight distribution, or contains liquids or hazardous materials.
5. When lifting as part of a team, take instructions from one person only. That person should have a clear view and need not be one of those lifting.
6. Always lift in the correct manner as you have been shown.
7. Stop work immediately if you feel any pull or strain; carrying on may result in serious injury.

Golden rule: if in doubt, don't do it!



Personal protection

Your supervisor will have identified when any personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used. This may include hard hats, eye protection, safety boots and ear defenders. If PPE is required it will be provided and you will be told when and how to use it.

We will provide work gloves appropriate to each task, for example when litter picking, using barbed wire or handling thorny vegetation. Work gloves are also very useful for protecting hands from minor cuts and blisters. However, gloves must not be worn when swinging wooden-shafted tools when they are wet.

You will be provided with safety boots or wellies with steel toe caps where it is essential. If you want to bring your own for personal comfort, please speak to your supervisor to make sure they are suitable, and we recommend that you break them in beforehand!



Fires

Bonfires must be constructed in a clear area well away from all buildings, footpaths, trees and vehicles and also taking into account the wind direction. Flammable liquids, such as petrol must never be used to light bonfires. Never leave the fire unattended and if it cannot be fully extinguished with the ashes allowed to cool at the end of the day, turn the fire in and fence it off.

In dry weather, smoking is likely to be prohibited on the work site. If smoking is allowed, ensure that cigarette ends, ash and matches are fully extinguished and properly disposed of before leaving the area.