



Code of Practice on Conservation Work Parties : Practical Tips

INTRODUCTION

A great deal of practical work is involved in managing the Green for public access and for wildlife. Being outdoors, working together and achieving visible results is enjoyable and rewarding. Some volunteers will be new to a particular activity and may be unfamiliar with the tools, the process and the type of outdoor location. There are certain risks of accidents, injury or illness resulting from the hazards associated with this kind of work.

HAZARDS

The main hazards come from the natural environment, the work itself, and from other people.

The natural environment

- Topography e.g. open water, muddy, boggy, steeply sloping or uneven ground causing injury or death through drowning, falling or tripping over
- Weather e.g. heat, cold, strong sun, wind, rain, causing hyper or hypothermia, sunstroke, skin cancer, dehydration, fatigue, exposure or exhaustion
- Plants & animals e.g. sap, spores pollen, thorns, bites or stings causing allergic reactions, irritation, hay fever, Phtophotodermatitis [PPD}, cuts or scratches, inflammation, irritation. infection, disease or poisoning
- Lack of hygiene facilities causing infection or illness

The work

- Physical work e.g. lifting, carrying, pulling, pushing causing strains, injury, fatigue or triggering heart problems, epileptic attack, hypoglycaemia, dehydration
- Tools & machinery causing cuts, strains, injury or death

Other people

- Their tools and machinery or their work products e.g. brash, logs, causing injury

This Code of Practice applies to ALL work parties run on behalf of the Trust at any location.

The work party leader is responsible for Health and Safety and has a duty to ensure that all volunteers apply this Code of Practice.

Paid contractors working for the Trust are also required to apply this Code of Practice. If any worker has any doubts about how to use tools or equipment or the right way to go about the task they should stop work immediately and take advice from the leader.

1. The following are PROHIBITED from all work parties

- dogs(unless tied up). The Trust is not responsible for the welfare of any dogs
- alcohol, drugs other than for medical purposes
- children under the age of 14 except when accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult at all times
- children under 14 using edged tools except loppers
- use of machinery on steep slopes
- use of power tools except by trained and competent persons
- work in woods in high winds
- use of electric equipment in the rain
- any work above shoulder height or which involves climbing except by appropriately trained and competent tree surgeons or for the erection of bat or bird boxes using ladders
- use of chainsaws or winches by a lone worker
- felling trees over 8" diameter with a bow saw
- any activity which is likely to cause accident or injury to the worker or others



2. Safety & Personal Protective Equipment

- Appropriate first aid kits will be provided at all work parties. The whereabouts of the kit will be made known to all.
- A charged mobile phone and details of the nearest accident hospital will be in the first aid kit, with descriptions of access for emergency services
- Hand cleaning facilities will be provided whenever reasonably practicable
- The appropriate risk assessments should be implemented to ensure safety when power tools are being used.
- When working near open water a safety throw line or other rescue equipment will be readily accessible. A buddy system will be used when working near water.
- When working on open water an appropriate risk assessment should be implemented.
- Hard hats must be worn when there is a risk of falling material e.g. cut trees, branches or when using sledge hammers, or post hole drivers.
- Goggles should be worn when cutting scrub especially thorny species.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Cover bare skin especially in summer.
- Safety footwear is mandatory for use with power tools or where there is a risk of falling heavy objects e.g. logs. Otherwise work or stout boots are acceptable.
- For protection against the effects of sun it is advisable to wear a hat, keep skin covered, use sun screen, wear sunglasses.
- For protection against cold, wind or rain, wear appropriate warm/waterproof clothing
- Work gloves are advisable at all times but only gripper gloves should be worn when using edged Tools



3. Training

Persons will be appropriately trained for any task they are asked to do or for any tools or equipment they are asked to use.

- The training must include maintenance (e.g. sharpening) and transportation of each tool. The leader will provide this training.
- Before using chainsaws, strimmers or brushcutters workers must have completed appropriate training and have achieved the relevant level of competence to industry standard
- Workers using mowers must receive instruction from a competent person.

4. Tools and equipment

The Trust approves the use of certain types of tools and equipment. All power tools, whether owned or hired by the Trust or by workers themselves, must conform to the Trust's safety standards. If in doubt whether your equipment is safe take advice from the Work Party leader.

- Check that any tools you are asked to use are in a safe condition
- Wrap or cover the blades of edged tools during transit to and from the work site.
- Carry tools safely so as to avoid injury to yourself or others. Tools should not be carried over shoulders.
- Take special care when carrying long handled tools or walking near someone carrying them.

5. Work Practices

- The Trust AND the volunteer are responsible for safety. Volunteers are required to act on the instructions of the Work Party leader.
- Make sure you know precisely what is to be done and how
- Keep a safe distance between you and other people. If someone enters this 'risk zone' stop work (safe distance must be at least 2 arms and 2 tool lengths)
- Be aware of other people around you and behind you including members of the public
- Do not attempt work which is beyond your capabilities
- If you are unsure how to go about a task or use a tool, stop and ask the Work Party leader
- Accidents are more likely if you are tired so stop and rest
- Volunteers must inform the Leader of any medical conditions that may affect their ability to work on the Green and of any medications that may be required e.g. epipens. The volunteer may wish to consult your doctor first before informing the Leader.
- If you have an accident or injury seek help from the first aider immediately
- If you see something which is causing a risk tell the leader at once