



Sunset Survey – Notes on carrying out a Health & Safety Risk Assessment (for surveys away from household)

Please read our current COVID-19 guidance at www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/covid-19-advice-for-nbmp-volunteers

Introduction

In everyday life all activity involves hazards – but the activity may not be risky. Being hit by a car while crossing the road is a potentially severe hazard – but if road safety procedures are followed then the probability of it occurring is low - hence the risk that you will be harmed in that way is also low.

Below you will find a simple health and safety checklist. We ask you to think about the hazards and risk level which may be present for your survey along your planned route. Our aim is to help you improve your own personal safety while carrying out surveys of bats in the field.

Carrying out the Sunset/Sunrise Survey away from your household

The aim of this survey is to record bats and other nocturnal wildlife close to your home.

If leaving your household to carry out the survey **you should only go to locations which are:**

- Close to home (short walking distance)
- Familiar to you and safe to walk after dusk or before dawn, with safe footpaths along the entire route
- Public open spaces (or if private land then you have permission to be there)

Please complete this checklist before carrying out the survey

Task	Completed
Select familiar route/locations within short walk of home	
Do not survey alone – enlist friends/family to accompany you on the surveys	
Consider any health/mobility issues that you or your helpers have and ensure the length/nature of the route is appropriate	
If visiting private land, contact landowners before carrying out your survey	
Plan route beforehand and walk in daylight in advance – stick to footpaths	
Identify hazards to be avoided on your survey, such as trip hazards, sudden drops, trouble spots (danger from other people), presence of animals etc.	
Check you have all of the necessary clothing and equipment:	
• Torch/headtorch with spare batteries	
• Mobile phone (fully charged)	
• Reflector jacket (if walking on roads without pavements – keep to a minimum)	
• Personal alarm if needed (for use in urban areas)	
• Waterproofs/extra layers in case of unexpected cold/wet weather	
• Appropriate footwear	

Other important information

RIDDOR

BCT must comply with *The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)*. If, in the course of carrying out your survey, you suffer any serious injuries (those which fall under the severity 3 category in the risk assessment), it is important that you let us know so that we can report the incident in the correct way. There is no need to report incidents where people are taken to hospital purely as a precaution when no injury is apparent.

You must also let us know if:

1. Anyone who is accompanying you on the survey is killed or taken to hospital following an injury arising from the survey.
2. Any injury results in incapacity for normal work for more than seven consecutive days, excluding the day of the accident but including all other days.
3. Any injury results in incapacity for normal work for more than three consecutive days (but less than seven) (not RIDDOR but we must record it).

Diseases and medical precautions

Weil's disease (Leptospirosis)

This is an infection caused by bacteria in water and so is a risk near rivers and lakes if open cuts come into contact with water. Workers should avoid contact with water especially if cut or grazed. If contact with water is made, you should wash the affected area. **If you contract flu-like symptoms, you should tell your doctor that you may have been exposed to Weil's disease.**

Lyme disease

This is an infectious disease caused by bacteria transmitted via the bite of an infected tick and is commonly (though not always) associated with a 'bulls-eye' rash spreading from the tick bite. If you have spent time in an area known to harbour ticks, you must check and remove ticks as soon as possible. Removal of ticks within the first 24 hours of attachment drastically reduces the chances of acquiring an infection. **If a tick is found and you contract flu-like symptoms, you should tell your doctor that you may have been exposed to Lyme disease. Check you know how to remove a tick by visiting this website: <https://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk/about-ticks/tick-removal/>**

Tetanus (lockjaw)

Tetanus is a serious but rare infection caused by bacteria found in soil and human/animal waste. It usually occurs when a flesh wound becomes contaminated. **Please ensure your tetanus jab is up to date (recommended every 10 years) and that cuts and scratches are covered.**

Toxocariasis

Toxocariasis is an infection caused by roundworm parasites. The risk comes from handling soil or sand contaminated with infected animal faeces (most commonly cats, dogs and foxes). If you come into contact with sand, soil, or the faeces of dogs, cats or foxes, ensure you wash your hands with clean water and soap or an antibacterial gel as soon as possible; do not rub your eyes. Most people experience no symptoms with toxocariasis infection, however some have symptoms such as coughs, headaches, stomach pains and/or high temperatures. **If you experience any of these symptoms you should inform your doctor that you may have been exposed to toxocariasis.**

Safeguarding

There is ever increasing scrutiny around safeguarding (of children and vulnerable adults) and our insurers expect us to exercise robust risk management in this area. This helps to protect BCT's, bat groups' and volunteers' interests and not leave any of us exposed to risk. To that end, we are required by insurers to communicate our safeguarding policy and procedure to any other organisation or volunteers covered by our insurance, i.e. surveyors, and to share with you relevant health and safety policies. BCT's safeguarding policy statement of intent is included in the survey pack, and the full version is available online at <https://www.bats.org.uk/the-trust/policies/safeguarding>. It is important that all volunteers take the time to read through and understand the policy. This is relevant if you are leading a survey with one or more other volunteers, and in particular if you are leading a survey with a child or vulnerable adult in attendance.

Further Advice

For further information or advice please contact us at nbmp@bats.org.uk or on 020 7820 7166.