

# Volunteer Safety Guide



Life: creating habitats  
... and nature  
... thrive

... and ponds  
... this stretch of the  
... created by Earth  
... England's longest  
... as a trade  
... fish into the  
... These new  
... flourish,  
... fish and



Pike



Snipe



water

## INTRODUCTION

This guide has been produced to provide all Earth Trust volunteers with health and safety information, designed to assist you in volunteering safely and effectively in helping to deliver our goals.

Please make sure you read this document, along with the Volunteer Handbook, before you begin volunteering with us.

At Earth Trust we are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of our staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors. This is achieved through the development of relevant documentation (such as this guide, and our policies), communication and the active involvement of our staff and volunteers throughout the health, safety and welfare process.

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of health, safety and welfare at Earth Trust, please refer to your Staff Lead, the Volunteer Manager or any other member of staff.

We aim to treat volunteers consistently with employees. You can find our policies, risk assessments and other useful documents here: [earthtrust.org.uk/volunteer-portal](https://earthtrust.org.uk/volunteer-portal)

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## **1. Health and Safety Responsibilities**

Our Health and Safety Policy and Arrangements reflect our commitment to the provision of a safe volunteering environment.

We are legally required to have a written Health and Safety Policy and identify the duties and responsibilities of those staff who have a specific role in managing health and safety within our workplace.

We also have a responsibility and duty to ensure that:

- Volunteers are aware of and understand the Health and Safety policy statement. (Included at the end of this guide.)
- Volunteers are aware of and understand the health and safety rules relating to their volunteering
- Volunteers are adequately instructed, trained and supervised
- All tools, equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is fit for purpose and maintained in a safe condition
- Volunteers are made aware of the hazards and risks associated with their activities
- Volunteers are given access to risk assessments

## **2. Health and Safety Rules**

This section outlines some of the general health and safety rules and has been prepared in accordance with acknowledged safe volunteering practices.

There may be additional, more specific procedures provided to you about how you carry out particular tasks and for which training will be provided by your Session Leader.

## Summary Rules

- Follow all policies, procedures, rules, instructions and risk assessment instructions provided to you
- Comply with all signs and notices displayed
- Only undertake tasks for which you have been trained and feel able to perform
- Only use the equipment you are trained to use
- Ensure that all the work equipment you use is in a safe condition
- Report any defective equipment to your Staff Lead
- Make full and proper use of any guards provided
- Wear PPE and utilise controls as specified
- Wear clothing appropriate to the conditions
- Do not enter unauthorised areas
- Ensure all pedestrian and vehicle traffic routes are kept clear at all times
- Maintain good housekeeping standards at all times
- Clear up spillages with the materials provided
- Report all accidents, incidents, hazards and near misses to your Staff Lead



- Seek first aid for even the smallest cuts and bruises
- Report all accidents no matter how minor
- Make sure it is entered into the accident book



**IF YOU DON'T REPORT IT WE CAN'T IMPROVE IT!**

### **Accidents & Incidents**

- Report all **injuries** suffered when volunteering (however minor) to a member of staff who will ensure that the details are entered into the Accident Book.
- Report all **accidents, incidents, near misses** and **dangerous occurrences** to a member of staff who will ensure that the details are entered into the Accident Book.
- If you are aware of an **accident, incident, near miss** or **dangerous occurrence** relating to someone else (visitor or contractor), ensure a member of staff is made aware.
- Report all instances of damage to any property or articles to a member of staff.

### **First Aid**

- Ensure that you are aware of who the First Aider(s)/Emergency First Aider(s)/Appointed Person(s) are and their location.
- Ensure you know where First Aid facilities are located and that you have access to them.

### **Working Practices**

- You must follow all safe working procedures and any specific training/instructions provided.
- You must wear suitable footwear at all times at your workplace.
- You must carry out manual handling tasks as instructed.

### **Tools & Equipment**

- Do not use or operate any equipment unless you have been trained, and authorised to do so.
- Do not make repairs to any work equipment unless you have been trained, and authorised to do so.
- Comply with all safe systems of work and working procedures.
- Report any fault, damage, defect or malfunction in any equipment to a staff member immediately.

## **Hazardous Substances**

- Do not use hazardous substances unless you have received the relevant information, and where necessary been trained and authorised to do so.
- Ensure that you are aware of all the information regarding the safe handling, storage and use of hazardous substances that you are working with.
- Use all hazardous substances in accordance with the written assessments and instructions provided.
- All hazardous, flammable, or explosive substances that are not in use must be stored correctly in their designated safe storage areas.
- Waste hazardous substances must be disposed of in the safe, approved manner provided to you.

## **Housekeeping & Environment**

- Clear up any spillage within the work area as soon as possible and report any hazardous conditions to your Staff Lead.
- Maintain good housekeeping practices at all times to keep all areas clean and tidy.
- Dispose of all rubbish and waste materials as instructed.
- Keep pathways clear of obstructions, tools and materials.

## **Fire**

- Comply with all emergency procedures provided to you and familiarise yourself with fire exits and escape routes.
- Ensure that you know where the fire extinguishers are located.
- Do not attempt to fight fires unless you have been trained to do so.
- Report any use of firefighting equipment to a member of staff.
- Do not obstruct any fire equipment, fire escape route, or fire exit doors at any time.
- Do not store rubbish or flammable materials in or around routes of escape
- Locked or obstructed fire escape routes must be reported immediately to a member of staff.
- Do not interfere with or misuse any fire equipment provided.

- Internal fire doors (marked) should be kept closed at all times, unless fitted with an automatic release device.

### **Personal Health**

- Report to the Volunteer Manager any medical condition or the use of medication which could affect your safety or the safety of others.
- Inform a member of staff if you feel unwell after volunteering
- Inform the Volunteer Manager, as soon as possible, if you are pregnant and continuing to volunteer
- Do not volunteer under the influence of either alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Protect all open wounds with a suitable dressing whilst volunteering.
- Report any unclean welfare / sanitary facilities to a member of staff.

### **Signs & Notices**

- Comply with all workplace signs and notices displayed.
- Do not deface or remove any health and/or safety sign.
- Report and damaged or missing safety signage.

### **Vehicles**

- Do not drive or operate any Earth Trust vehicle without approval from a member of staff.
- Promptly report to the Volunteer Officer any medical condition that may limit or affect your ability to drive.
- Promptly report to the Volunteer Officer any endorsements or changes to your driving licence if you are using Earth Trust vehicles.
- Work vehicles must not be used for unauthorised purposes.
- Do not allow unauthorised passengers in work vehicles.
- Do not use a mobile phone or other electronic device whilst driving.
- All vehicle accidents must be reported, regardless of if there was an injury or not.
- Periodic checks will be carried out to ensure validity of volunteer driving licences if using Earth Trust vehicles.

### **Protective Clothing and Equipment (PPE)**

- Inspect PPE each time you use it to ensure it remains fit for purpose.



- All PPE provided must be worn and used at all times as instructed. If PPE is unavailable, the task should not be performed.
- All items of PPE must be stored correctly to prevent damage.
- You must not damage or misuse any item of PPE.
- Inform your Staff Lead of any PPE defects or loss.

### **3. Lone Working**

We have guidance to ensure your safety if you are going out on any of our sites alone. We aim to minimise any lone working, however, if you are undertaking this type of activity, the Lone Working Policy will be provided to you by your Staff Lead. You can also find it on the [Useful Documents page](#). Please discuss this with your Staff Lead and familiarise yourself with its contents.

### **4. Remote Volunteering**

If you are volunteering for us remotely or from home, the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment Checklist will be provided to you by your Staff Lead.

Please discuss this with your Staff Lead and familiarise yourself with its contents and then complete an assessment of your working environment. Send a copy of the checklist to your Staff Lead within your first week of volunteering.

### **5. Safeguarding**

Earth Trust's Safeguarding Policies commit-us to keeping children and adults at risk safe from abuse, neglect or any kind of harm or distress during their contact with us. Everyone has a shared responsibility in achieving this. If you witness or hear about anything that you think may be a safeguarding concern, or could potentially put a child or vulnerable adult at risk, speak to a member of staff immediately. You can also speak with Earth Trust's Safeguarding Lead (Anna Wilson) or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Dave Lewis). The policies are available on the useful documents page mentioned above.

## **6. Young Volunteers**

We will try to accommodate young volunteers wherever we can. We can only accept volunteers over the age of 13. Volunteers age 13-16 need to be accompanied by a parent or adult over the age of 18 and will remain the responsibility of said guardian during their volunteer session. Volunteers age 16-17 will need to have additional paperwork completed by their parent or guardian. They will then be assigned to a DBS certified staff member or volunteer.

## **7. Risk Assessments**

Risk Assessments are an essential part of managing site or task based risk. Where an activity requires a Risk Assessment, any person undertaking the task must have access to and be familiar with the information contained in the Risk Assessment. This can be directly accessed (access to the RA itself) or indirectly, via a person acting as a supervisor (staff, volunteer or a hirer).

Supervision is defined as:

- A safety briefing before the task is carried out, this can be in person or via email. Where the task is a regular activity, the briefing may not need to take place immediately before the activity. If it can reasonably determine that the mitigations remain familiar and cover everyone involved, then a previous briefing will suffice
- A routine is in place to ensure that the mitigations in the RA are being followed. Such a routine may be determined according to the level of risk.

All Risk Assessments are available via your Staff Lead or the Volunteer Manager. More general Risk Assessments can be found on the useful documents page.

## 8. Fire Safety



### Fire Procedure If You Discover a Fire

- Raise the alarm - shout 'fire, fire, fire' or activate the fire alarm.
- Vacate the premises by the nearest safe available exit and proceed to your designated assembly point.
- ONLY attempt to extinguish the fire if you are trained and it safe to do so.



### On Hearing a fire Warning

- Leave the building immediately by the nearest available exit and proceed to your designated assembly point. At Earth Trust Centre this is the main car park.
- Do not run, or return to collect personal belongings.
- Any visitors present at the time of an emergency must be escorted to the assembly point.

**DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDINGS UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO BY THE PERSON IN CHARGE.**

## 9. Workplace Safety Signage



### SAFE CONDITION

Green background, white symbol.

Provides information about a safe condition or area.



### WARNING

Yellow triangle with a black border.

Gives a warning of a risk of danger.

		Know your fire extinguishers				
		WATER	FOAM SPRAY	CO2	ABC POWDER	WET CHEMICAL
 Wood, paper and textiles.	 Safe for	 Safe for	 Not safe for	 Safe for	 Safe for	
 Flammable liquids.	 Not safe for	 Safe for	 Safe for	 Safe for	 Not safe for	
 Gaseous fires.	 Not safe for	 Not safe for	 Not safe for	 Safe for	 Not safe for	
 Cooking oils and deep fat fires	 Not safe for	 Not safe for	 Not safe for	 Not safe for	 Safe for	
 Live electrical equipment.	 Not safe for	 Not safe for	 Safe for	 Safe for	 Not safe for	



## **PROHIBITION**

White circular sign with a red border and red crossbar running from top left to bottom right.

States that you can't do something.



## **MANDATORY**

Circular with a blue background and a white symbol.

The command on the sign must be obeyed.

## 10. Hazardous substances

### Control of Substances Hazardous to Human Health (COSHH)










Under the COSHH regulations, all persons at work need to know the safety precautions to take so as not to endanger themselves or others through exposure to substances hazardous to health.

Products you use may be designated 'dangerous for supply'. If so, they will have a label that has one or more hazard symbols. Some examples are given below.

These products include common substances in everyday use such as paint, bleach, solvent or fillers. When a product is 'dangerous for supply', by law, the supplier must provide you with a safety data sheet.

Safety data sheets can be hard to understand, with little information on measures for control. However, to find out about health risks and emergency situations, concentrate on:

- Sections 2 and 16 of the sheet, which tell you what the dangers are.
- Sections 4-8, which tell you about emergencies, storage and handling.

What do the COSHH symbols mean?		
 Dangerous to the environment	 Toxic	 Gas under pressure
 Corrosive	 Explosive	 Flammable
 Caution – used for less serious health hazards like skin irritation	 Oxidising	 Longer term health hazards such as carcinogenicity

Since 2009, new international symbols have been gradually replacing the European symbols. Some of them are similar to the European symbols, but there is no single word describing the hazard.

Ensure that you read the hazard statement on the packaging and the safety data sheet or that the information from the safety data sheet and the appropriate safety precautions and control measures are made available to you.

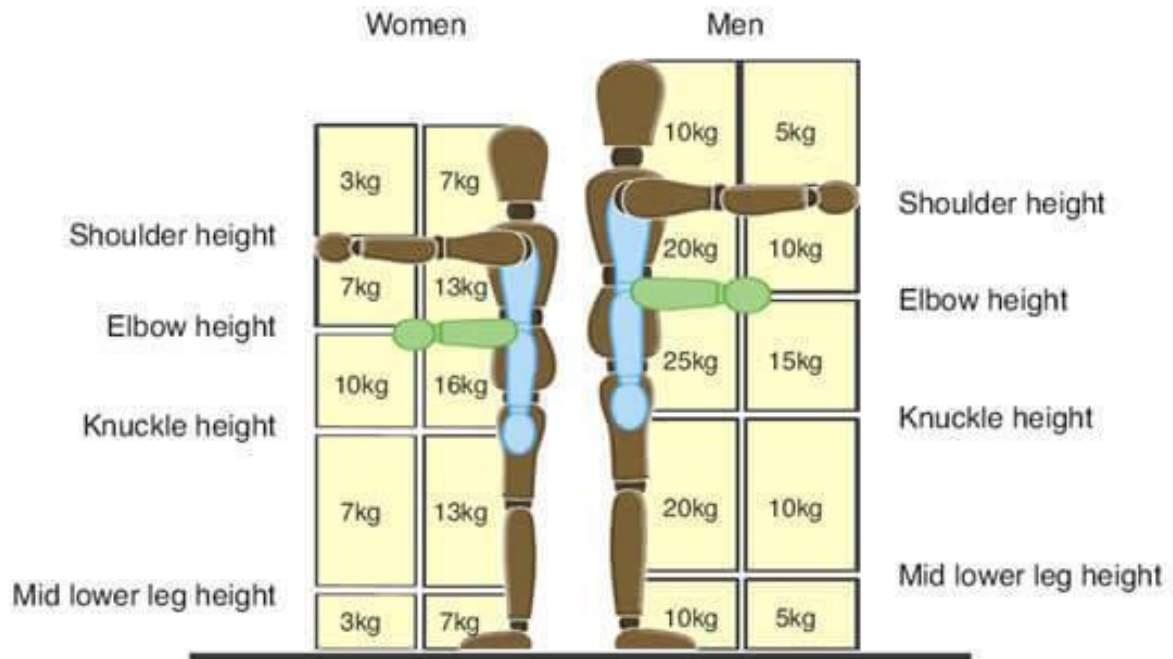
## 11. Manual Handling

Carefully assess each load before you lift it, and if you consider it beyond your capability ask for advice or assistance. Do not lift more than you can safely push or carry. Wherever possible you should utilise mechanical aids to move or carry heavy loads.

- 1) **Stop and think** - How heavy is the load, where are you going to take it, are appropriate handling aids available and will assistance be required?
- 2) **Position the feet** - Stand close to the load with your feet apart and one leg slightly forward to maintain balance.
- 3) **Adopt a good posture** - Bend your legs and knees then raise your head; do not stoop over the load.
- 4) **Get a firm grip** - Where possible keep the load as close to the body as possible. Use handles or devices already fitted to the load if available. Use hand protection if needed.
- 5) **Move the feet** - Slowly stand lifting the load, letting your legs do the lifting. Once upright do not jerk the load whilst carrying it. Avoid twisting or bending whilst carrying the load.
- 6) **Put down and adjust** - Slowly lower the load using the same principle and then adjust the position. Do not try and position the load whilst lowering it.

Where a lift requires multiple people, discuss the lift in advance with clear instructions to ensure all participants are following the guidance above. Wherever possible, a single person should take the lead.

## Recommended maximum weights when standing



## Recommended approach to lifting objects





## 12. Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment does not in itself prevent accidents, it helps prevent injuries. Please make sure you use all the PPE that you are provided with by your Staff Lead at all times. It is your responsibility to look after it, keep it clean and store it correctly. Do not lend your kit to others.



### Eye protection

Check that there is no damage to the lenses (scratched, cracked or pitted) that they are clean.



### Gloves

Ensure you have the correct type for the work to be done. Check they are in good condition.



### Ear protection

Ear protection should be correctly worn and cleaned regularly. If using disposable earplugs, change them regularly.



### Footwear

This should be suitable for the conditions at work and in good condition.



### Head protection

Must be clean and with no obvious signs of damage. Head protection must not be decorated with stickers or written on.



### High visibility clothing

This must be kept clean so that the reflective strips work.

## **13. Working at Height**

Only use equipment for working at height if you feel comfortable doing so.

### **Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders**

On average 50 people in Great Britain die each year as a result of a fall from height and a further 8,702 are seriously injured. Any working at height should not be done alone, always ensure you have someone with you.

If you don't work at height very often or are unsure about which type of access equipment to use, it's important that you assess the risks and select the right equipment for the job. Reduce the risk of unnecessary accidents and injuries by following these simple measures.

### **Set-up for leaning ladders**

- Do a daily pre-use check (include ladder feet)
- Secure it
- Ground should be firm and level
- Maximum safe ground side slope 16° (level the rungs with a suitable device)
- Maximum safe ground back slope 6°
- Have a strong upper resting point (not plastic guttering)
- Floors should be clean, not slippery

### **Leaning ladders in-use**

- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Light work (up to 10 kg)
- Ladder angle 75° – 1 in 4 rule (1 unit out for every 4 units up)
- Always grip the ladder when climbing
- Do not overreach - make sure your belt buckle / navel stays within the stiles and keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task
- Do not work off the top three rungs – this provides a handhold

### **Set-up for stepladders**

- Daily pre-use check (feet included)
- Ensure there is space to fully open
- Use any locking devices
- Ground should be firm and level
- Floors should be clean, not slippery

### **Stepladders in-use**

- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Light work (up to 10 kg)
- Do not work off the top two steps (top three steps for swing-back/double-sided stepladders) unless you have a safe handhold on the steps
- Avoid side-on working



# The right way

✓ *Meets British or European standard*

*BS 2037*

*BS 1129*

*BS 7377*

*BS EN 131  
(or EN 131)*

✓ *ladder undamaged*

✓ *right height for the job*

✓ *flat shoes*

✓ *clean steps*

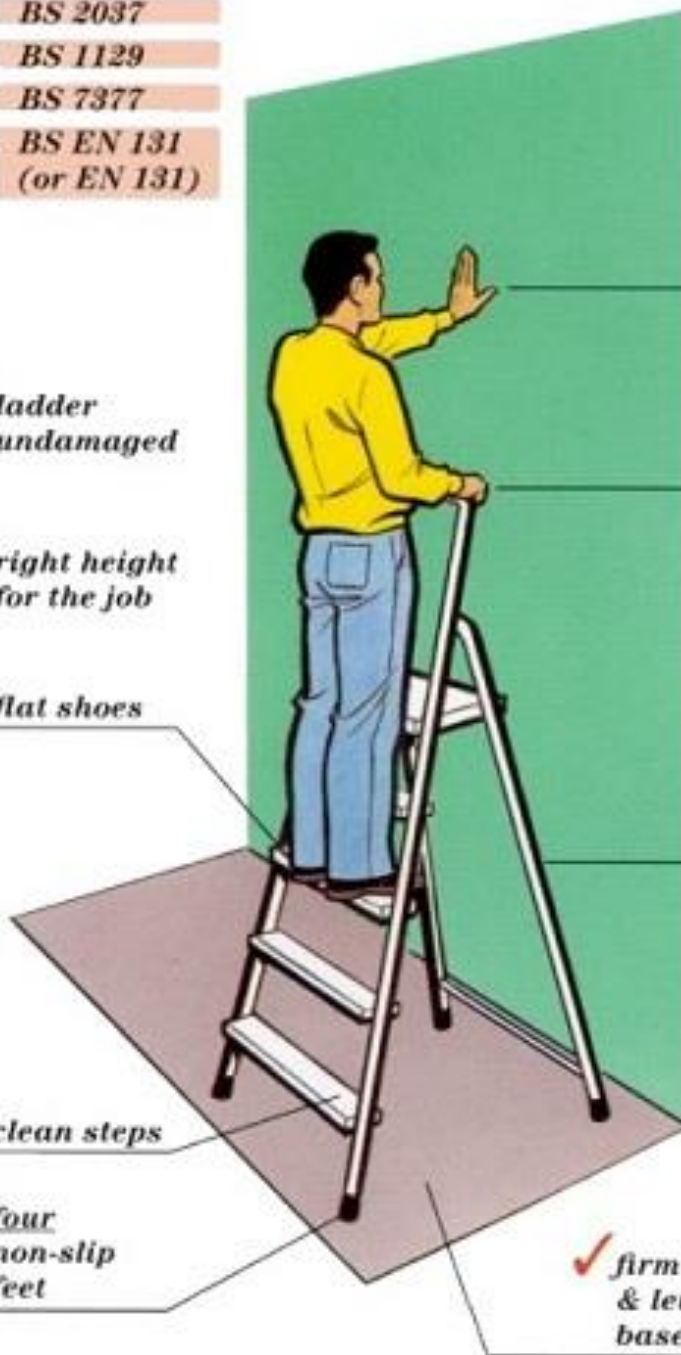
✓ *four non-slip feet*

✓ *no over-reaching*

✓ *good grip*

✓ *front-on*

✓ *firm & level base*



## **EARTH TRUST HEALTH AND SAFETY GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT OF INTENT**

At Earth Trust we regard health and safety as a priority and are committed through strong visible leadership in the promotion and achievement of safe and healthy conditions in our workplace.

We aim to create an environment where risks are minimised, accidents are reduced and good mental and physical health is promoted. This applies not only in the context of our volunteers but also in respect of all others involved in or who could be affected by its activities.

Our objectives will be achieved by senior management taking responsibility and committing resources to ensure the success of this policy. This will be achieved, so far as is reasonably practicable, by:

- Meeting the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other relevant legal obligations to maintain safe and healthy conditions.
- Ensuring formal risk assessments are conducted, documented, and communicated to the relevant parties/volunteers.
- Providing and maintaining plant and systems of work that are safe.
- Ensuring the safety and reduction of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of equipment and substances.
- Providing such information, instruction, training and supervision as may be necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of our volunteers.
- Consulting with volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety.
- Preventing accidents and cases of work-related ill health.
- Providing safe access and egress to work areas.
- Appointing competent personnel to advise on compliance with statutory duties and to undertake reviews of the policy as necessary.
- Aiming for continual improvement of our health & safety management performance, through a process of regular monitoring and review.
- Promoting health and safety as a fundamental element throughout all levels within the organisation.
- Co-operating fully with relevant enforcement authorities and any other relevant external agencies.
- Having adequate means of communication for volunteers where English is not their first language.
- Recognising the duty to co-operate and work with other employers to ensure the continued health and safety of all of those at work.

To help achieve these objectives and to ensure our staff and volunteers recognise their duties under health and safety legislation whilst at work, they are informed of their duty to take reasonable care for themselves and for others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

*A signed and dated copy of the Health & Safety Policy Statement is provided on the main Earth Trust Centre noticeboard in reception.*