



WBCS COSHH risk assessments

Prepared December 2012 Updated August 2015 (minor updates shown with underline)

Based on information from the HSE Website – COSHH issues.

The examples are taken from BTCV's booklet "Health and Safety Overview" pub. 2006

West Berkshire Countryside Society - COSHH assessment information for Guided Walks and Conservation Tasks

- This sheet gives a summary of COSHH related issues likely to occur during WBCS activities.
- It is not exhaustive or final. Be ready to include others in the light of experience.
- It is envisaged that the recording of the risks and their controls will be included in the WBCS Safety Plans and Risk Assessment sheets. They have prompts for COSHH issues.
- Overleaf is a checklist of steps for a full, detailed COSHH assessment should it be required.
- The core requirement is that the findings of the assessments are implemented and communicated to the participants.
- The "Briefing" at the start of an activity should satisfy this requirement.
- Some high-risk activities, e.g. spraying, will need their own specific documentation.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health –

COSHH in the context of guided walks and conservation tasks requires us to:-

1. Identify the substances and the hazards,
 2. Identify those at risk
 3. Identify controls and responses
 4. Record, implement and communicate findings and
 5. Review the assessment(s) on a regular basis.
- Indicating who should do what and by which date.

Substances hazardous to health are defined as:-

Toxic, harmful, irritant, or corrosive including harmful micro-organisms, mixtures and other compounds related to work activities that can harm people's health.

Likely sources of hazards

COSHH Chemicals, dust etc.

Spraying - Exposure during spraying or brush application and use of woodland pesticides and herbicides.

Dusts from cement or sanding of preserved timber

COSHH Micro-organisms

Lyme disease

Bacterial infection from animal ticks in woodlands and especially bracken

Tetanus

Disease-forming spores enter body through cuts or puncture wounds- from contact with soil

Toxocara canis

From dog faeces – can cause blindness in children

Weil's disease (leptospirosis) - Bacterial infection from rat urine in streams, ponds etc.

Bites & stings - animals, wasps, nettles adders

Blue green algae

Contact with toxic bloom on water in hot weather

Bracken

Exposure to spores of bracken and associated fungi.

Thorns and brambles

Exposure to infection via puncture wounds

Phytophotodermatitis (PPD) Exposure to dermatitis from contact with plant sap - e.g. giant hogweed, wild parsnip, wild angelica



COSHH - generic risk assessments

Please use this as an aid when filling in Safety Plans and Risk Assessments (RA)
The WBCS RA sheets have prompts for COSHH issues. Completing them should cover most situations.

Should a specific itemised COSHH assessment be needed it is recommended that this same format and 5 steps are used.
A blank form is available

Step 1 The Substance and the Hazard	Step 2 Who is at risk?	Step 3 Controls and responses	Step 4 Action By whom?	
COSHH - Chemicals				
<i>BTCV Recommends that volunteers do not work with COSHH related chemicals If used, training and manufacturer's COSHH ref. sheets should be provided and used</i>				
Spraying Exposure during spraying <u>or brush application</u> of woodland pesticides and herbicides. Eg stump treatment	Operative and volunteers in immediate area. Walkers and animals passing through the area	Only used by NPTC trained operators who use relevant controls including PPE Operator to ensure specific COSHH assessments completed	Check that warning signage is available and used if needed. Ensure manufacturer's COSHH ref. sheets are adhered to.	Operative & Task Leader
Exposure during transport of COSHH rated chemicals	Operative and or driver	Substances not carried in a closed cab.		Operative & Task Leader
Exposure to substances in poorly marked or stored containers	Operative and others	Containers clearly marked, stored and disposed of safely		Operative & Task Leader
COSHH - Micro-organisms				
Lyme disease Bacterial infection from animal tick in woodlands especially bracken	Participants in bracken especially March to June and August to October	Minimal skin exposed. Gloves Check clothes and skin at end of work period	Remove or squash tick alighting on skin - if tick attaches <u>use special removal tool</u> .	Task Leader & participants
Tetanus Disease-forming spores enter body through cuts or puncture wounds- from contact with soil	Participants	Advise participants to obtain inoculation - consult their GP for this	Immunity to be kept up to date.	Task Leader & participants
Toxocara canis From dog faeces – can cause blindness in children	Children vulnerable adults less so	If in contact with faeces then wash skin and clothes ASAP		Task Leader & participants
Weil's disease (leptospirosis) - Bacterial infection from rat urine Infection occurs through cuts and abrasions and lining of eyes and mouth - symptoms flu like leading to meningitis & jaundice	Participants working in water and on wet banks	Cover cuts with waterproof plasters and avoid further contact with site water. Good hygiene - washing hands before eating Use of PPE. inc. wellies	Consult GP if symptoms appear. Free info. Card from HSE "Leptospirosis – are you at risk?"	Task Leader & participants
Bites & stings - animals, wasps, nettles adders etc. Bites from animals to hospital ASAP	Participants	Stings from plants or insects rarely a problem but look for major allergic reaction - anaphylactic shock - blotchy skin, swelling of face and neck, or impaired breathing and rapid pulse- hospital ASAP		Task Leader & participants
Blue green algae Contact with toxic bloom on water in hot weather	Participants	Avoid work near algae	Wash immediately if in contact	Task Leader & participants
Bracken Exposure to spores of bracken and associated fungi	Participants working in bracken from July to September	Protect skin and use gloves- avoid prolonged working in bracken from July to September	Mechanical cutting requires a specific COSHH assessment	Task Leader & participants
Thorns and brambles Exposure to infection via puncture wounds	Participants	Use gloves and stout legwear Deal with splinters promptly	Visit GP if serious pain or swelling occurs	Task Leader & participants
Phytophotodermatitis (PPD) Exposure to dermatitis from contact with plant sap - e.g. giant hogweed, wild parsnip, wild angelica	Participants	Check for presence using book or expert	DO NOT TOUCH - use gloves etc.	Task Leader & participants
Step 5 Review - points to consider		Add any of these points to the "Other hazards occurring ..." panel on the RA		
Further hazards identified?	What improvements do you need?	Supervision, instruction and training needed?	Emergency plans amended?	



COSHH - specific risk assessment

COSHH – Chemicals inc dust and COSHH - Micro-organisms

*BTCV Recommends that volunteers do not work with COSHH related chemicals
If used, training and manufacturer's COSHH ref. sheets should be provided and used*

Specific assessment for:-
Assessed by:-
Date:-
Step 1 The Substance and the Hazard
Step 2 Who is at risk?
Step 3 Controls and responses
Step 4 Action – by whom and date
Step 5 Review What improvements do you need? Supervision, instruction and training needed? Emergency plans amended?