



# **VOLUNTEER SAFETY POLICY**

## **INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE**

**HSP-14**

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**This H&S Guidance Note is relevant to and must be implement by H&S Committee and specifically: -**

Chief Executive Officer
Director of Conservation
Director Fundraising and Marketing
Head of Nature Reserves
Business Support Manager
Nature and Wellbeing Manager
Volunteer Co-ordinator
Manager – First Ecology
Manager – SERC
All volunteers, staff, students and trainees

## 1. Introduction and background

The operational Health and Safety Policy HSP-14 sits directly under the Health and Safety Policy for Somerset Wildlife Trust and its subsidiaries (hereafter 'the Trust') and is reviewed at least every two years, or immediately following an accident or change of legislation, etc.

## 2. Scope

HSP-14 applies to all Volunteers, Trustees, Directors, managers, staff and placement students and trainees. It provides guidance for everyone regarding their role and responsibilities when recruiting, supervising and planning the work of volunteers. It also details volunteers' health and safety responsibilities.

## 3. Aim

The purpose of the 'Volunteer Safety' H&S Policy is to ensure consistency in risk management across the Trust, including its subsidiaries, in all aspects of health and safety relevant to the tasks undertaken by its volunteers.

## 4. Legislation: The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of H&S at Work 1999

Organisations have a 'duty-of-care' towards its volunteers. This means that reasonable steps must be taken to reduce the probability and seriousness of injury to volunteers. This could include providing them with suitable information, training, safety clothing and PPE, supervision and so on. There are also duties on employers under section 3 of the HSAW Act 1974 to take account of the health and safety of those people (other than their employees) who may be affected by their activities, and to give them relevant health and safety information.

## 5. Risk assessments

There is a duty on employers to carry out risk assessments. Volunteers must follow these steps:

- a) Volunteers must obtain the relevant 'Generic' task-based risk assessments for their planned work activity or event. Generic risk assessments are only written and approved by Trust staff. The relevant Generic risk assessment(s) (**Appendix 1**) are available via the responsible manager.
- b) Volunteers must comply with and implement all the control measures detailed within the risk assessment to reduce and manage risks and follow all safety 'rules', designed for everyone's health and safety. This includes the use of essential PPE required for the task.
- c) Generic risk assessments are used in conjunction with SWT's 'Site-hazard overview forms' (**Appendix 2**) created by Reserves Managers for each Trust reserve and premises. Typically, these provide details of the topography of the land, specific natural hazards, details of type of grazing livestock (if any), local hospital, grid references, mobile phone signals etc.
- d) If you are volunteering on behalf of the Trust and planning an event or activity at a non-Trust venue or reserve, volunteers must complete a 'Supporting H&S Information' form (**Appendix 3**) well in advance of the event or activity and return it to the responsible member of staff with a copy to the Volunteer coordinator, at least 14 working days before the event or activity is due to take place.

Periodically, the Volunteer Co-ordinator or responsible manager may join in the activity, to observe health and safety custom-and-practice.

## **6. Health and safety Policy**

HSP-14 Volunteer Safety, sits under the Trust's 'Health and Safety Policy', which sets out the organisation and arrangements for health and safety and includes a section on Volunteers' responsibilities. All Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Health and Safety Policy (**Appendix 4.**), which outlines everyone's health and responsibilities, including those of the Trust's volunteers.

## **7. Liability and insurance**

The Trust's Employers' Liability and Public Liability insurance (**Appendix 5**) that extends to the work undertaken by its authorised volunteers. All role descriptions for Volunteers must be approved by the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **8. Reporting of Accidents and 'near-misses'**

All volunteers must have access to the Trust's 'Accident Report form' and 'Near-miss/Incident Report form' and they must be aware of the importance of reporting all accidents and 'near misses'. (**Appendix 6**)

## **9. Training workshops**

Essential training may include topics such as 'Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk'. Where the Trust has longer-term volunteers doing specific tasks, they may be required to attend mandatory external certificated training, such as 'First Aid' or competency training e.g. 'Chainsaw Operations' and other land-management qualifications.

## **10. Information and support**

The Volunteer Co-ordinator, who is available to answer questions and provide on-going support along with other key managers, such as the Nature and Wellbeing Manager, who supports Watch Leader volunteers.

## **11. Other relevant documents:**

### **Volunteer Policy – see (Appendix 7)**

This policy sets out our commitment to volunteers.

### **Volunteer Registration Form – see (Appendix 8)**

A necessary document we require all volunteers to complete upon joining the Trust. The information provided is useful for funding applications but more importantly for the health, safety and wellbeing of our volunteers.

### **Volunteer Key Agreement - see (Appendix 9)**

This is for volunteers who may be with the Trust or its subsidiaries for a sustained period, or regular day(s) of the week, such as long-term Reception or office volunteers at HQ or Graduate students with First Ecology or SERC. The Volunteer Key Agreement is NOT a contract of employment, nor does it imply that it is. It is purely an agreement, so each party is clear about their roles and responsibilities.

## **Volunteer Age Restrictions- see (Appendix 10)**

This document states our stance on age restrictions and the rights and responsibilities of both the volunteer and staff.