

BeeWalk volunteer health and safety

Volunteer responsibility

Whilst carrying out activities for the Trust each volunteer has the responsibility of ensuring they are aware of their own health and safety and that of others around them and act accordingly. As a volunteer you are not under any obligation to continue with the survey scheme, as such if you feel your health and safety is compromised you should not continue your activities or place yourself or others in danger. Any concerns should be raised with staff via beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org

Risks

BeeWalk surveys are undertaken at your own risk. Before undertaking survey activities, please consider the particular health and safety hazards associated with each survey site (such as terrain, livestock, proximity to roads or waterways etc.) and whether you will be exposed to particular hazards. If you do not feel that you can reduce the risks associated with surveying a site (such as by wearing suitable footwear, avoiding fields with livestock etc.) please do not put yourself in danger.

Access permission

To enter private land, or land not subject to open access legislation, please ensure you have permission from the relevant landowners or tenant. A letter confirming your involvement in survey monitoring work can be provided, email beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org if you would like a copy. If it is possible and practical to do so, it is courteous to advise the landowner of what you are doing and why.

Always abide by The Countryside Code www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code www.outdooraccessscotland.com.

Parking

When visiting a site take care to park cars sensibly, preferably off-road, and do not block entrances and gates.

General precautions

Check weather reports before undertaking outdoor activities and wear appropriate clothing. Long-sleeved clothes and trousers will help prevent scratches, nettle stings and tick bites. In hot conditions wear sun protection. Ensure you take adequate water and food supplies suitable to the length of your survey. Avoid or abandon outdoor activities in bad weather.

Avoid working alone wherever possible. If you do survey alone ensure you make someone aware of your activities, location and route and time expected back. Advise them of who to contact in case of emergency.

If possible carry a mobile phone with you for emergency use, note that mobile phones may not work in some remote areas. In case of an emergency you can use either the European Emergency Number (112) or 999 (see www.eena.org for more information). 112 can be dialled even if the keypad is locked.

Difficult terrain

Plan routes to avoid difficult and dangerous terrain, such as close to cliff edges and watercourses. Take extra care in boggy areas and areas with unstable ground, such as areas with loose rock and collapsed underground burrows. Wear high visibility clothing when surveying areas close to roads. Avoid crossing potentially hazardous sites, such as quarries and railway lines and take notice of warning signs, do not enter private land that has been deliberately obstructed.

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Livestock and agricultural machinery

Take special care when entering areas with livestock, especially cattle, rams and horses. Do not enter fields containing bulls or cows with calves and be especially cautious with farm/guard dogs. Rutting deer can also be aggressive in the autumn. Avoid undertaking surveys in close proximity to working agricultural machinery or forestry operations.

Human confrontation

Avoid confrontation with landowners, land workers or members of the public. You may wish to carry confirmation of the activities you are undertaking, a letter confirming your involvement in survey monitoring work can be provided, email beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org if you would like a copy. If you have any concerns about your personal safety, stop activities immediately.

Lyme disease

Lyme disease is a bacterial disease transmitted by animal ticks associated with rank vegetation, which can lead to severe symptoms if left untreated. A variety of animals act as hosts for the bacteria, including sheep, deer and pheasants. Make regular checks of skin and hair following survey work. Remove ticks from the skin as soon as possible. Wear light-coloured clothing so that ticks are visible, tuck trousers into socks so that ticks cannot attach or climb up the inside of clothing without being seen.