



WBCS COSHH risk assessments

Based on information from the HSE Website – COSHH issues.
The examples are taken from BTCV's booklet "Health and Safety Overview" pub. 2006
Prepared December 2012 Updated August 2015 and Nov 2018

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.
- 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.

A full checklist of hazards and controls is available.
See <WBCS COSHH Risk Assessments full v1.2018.doc>

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