

**Title: Dealing with Dangerous Animals and Wildlife**

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## PLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANUAL

### 1. Scope

This Code of Practice provides advice and guidance on dealing with dangerous animals and wildlife.

### 2. Application

Any member of Staff, who as part of their duties, may come into contact with dangerous animals or wildlife during routine or reactive fieldwork.

### 3. Hazards Identified

Section 5 Domestic Animals

Section 6 Farm Animals

Section 7 Insects

Section 8 Rats

Section 9 Snakes

Section 10 Ticks

Section 11 Wild Animals

### 4. Personal Protective Equipment

(i) Suitable stout footwear with ankle support

(ii) Long-sleeved shirt or jacket and trousers

(iii) Suitable gloves

Other equipment to be worn or used as appropriate see CPA5 PPE.

High visibility or brightly coloured clothing could attract the unwanted attention of livestock to the wearer. All staff would be advised to remove or cover any such clothing prior to entering stock fields.

### 5. Domestic Animals

Notes: There are a number of animals that are kept as domestic pets. Those most likely to be encountered in the countryside are cats and dogs. Dogs will generally be in the control of their keepers and it is unlikely that they will attack an adult under these circumstances but an unaccompanied dog should be treated with suspicion. The bites and scratches from both cats and dogs can cause infection.

### Frequency of exposure

**to hazard:** Constant

**Risks:** Sudden confrontation, bites and scratches

**Likelihood:** Low possibility

**Possible result:** Shock, trauma, pain, infection

**Likely seriousness:** Minor illness or injury

### Measures to reduce risk:

Wear appropriate clothing for walking in the countryside and keep a sharp lookout for loose dogs.

Try not to stare at the dog, avoid eye contact and walk backwards. Avoid physical contact with all animals.

### Measures to reduce the effect:

Seek medical attention as soon as possible after being bitten or scratched.

## 6. Farm Animals

**Notes:** There are a number of indigenous farm animals that may be found in the countryside. They are most likely to be encountered in fields, farmyards and occasionally on linking roads. Cattle, sheep, and horses are the most common animals likely to be encountered but goats, pigs, chickens, geese, and other fowl will also be seen.

Few farm animals will hold their ground at the approach of humans but caution should always be exercised as the behaviour of all animals is unpredictable, particularly when they are accompanied by their young.

Extreme caution is necessary in respect of bulls, stallions, boars, and rams.

Increasingly, non-indigenous species are being introduced into the countryside, including ostriches and llama. These animals are likely to be in special enclosures but they are particularly unpredictable and should always be regarded as being potentially dangerous.

### Frequency of exposure

**to hazard:** Constant

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<b>Risks:</b>	Bites, kicks, goring, stamping and crushing
<b>Likelihood:</b>	Possible
<b>Possible result:</b>	Emotional trauma, cuts, bruises, broken bones, external and internal injuries, infections and allergic reactions
<b>Likely seriousness:</b>	Injury requiring medical attention

### Measures to reduce risk:

If contact is unavoidable, avoid sudden moves and do not place yourself between a female animal and its young. Do not run or show signs of fear. Leave the animal enclosure as quickly as possible, without running.

### Measures to reduce the effect:

Seek immediate medical attention for any injuries.

## 7. Insects

Notes: Some of the very many insects indigenous to the United Kingdom are harmful to health. The stings of wasps, bees and hornets may cause an allergic reaction which, if untreated, can (in rare cases) cause death. Mosquito, midge and horse-fly bites can also result in allergic reactions leading to irritation and discomfort.

(See also **TICKS** - Section 10)

### Frequency of exposure

**to hazard:** Constant from April to October

**Risks:** Bites and stings

**Likelihood:** Likely

**Possible result:** Shock, pain and swelling in area of bite or sting

**Likely seriousness:** Condition requiring medical attention. Persons with allergies may suffer more serious conditions.

### Measures to reduce risk:

Wear long trousers (tucked into socks) and long sleeved top, to cover legs and arms.

Take care not to disturb hives or nests and keep well clear of swarming bees or

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wasps.

Use insect repellent at all times when in areas where insects are known to be active, particularly if you suffer severe reaction to insect bite or stings.

### Measures to reduce the effect:

Seek medical attention in cases of severe reaction.

Carry antidote for any known, personal allergy.

## 8. Rats

Notes: Rats fall within the wild animal category but they are dealt with separately because they carry Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis). This is a serious infectious disease, which can be spread to humans through water contaminated by infected animals, particularly rats, and can occur after immersion of any part of the body in infected water.

### Frequency of exposure

**to hazard:** Very infrequent

**Risks:** Infection through cuts, scratches, or abrasions or by mouth.

**Likelihood:** Unlikely

**Possible result:** Serious illness with symptoms similar to influenza (headache, fever and muscle pains). May also be mistaken for pneumonia, tonsillitis, or rheumatic fever

**Likely seriousness:** Serious long-term sickness, possibly fatal if untreated

### Measures to reduce risk:

When working in water, wear protective clothing and boots and avoid rubbing the nose mouth or eyes with your hands.

After contact with water, which may be infected, or with contaminated boots or clothing, wash affected parts of the body thoroughly with soap and water, paying particular attention to fingernails. Do not eat until you have thoroughly cleaned your hands and arms.

Wet clothing and footwear should be thoroughly cleaned as soon as possible after

use.

**Measures to reduce the effect:**

If you suffer from any of the symptoms described above, or have any other reason to suspect that you may have become infected seek immediate medical attention and inform the doctor that you may have been in contact with contaminated rats or their excrement.

**9. Snakes**

Notes: Adders are the only indigenous poisonous snakes in the United Kingdom. They are most likely to be found basking on warm lowland heaths, including coastal slopes. They are retiring animals and it is unlikely they will hold their ground at the approach of humans. The bite of an Adder is poisonous and medical attention should be quickly sought, healthy adults may suffer, but should survive. Only young children are seriously at risk.

The risk of bites is slightly greater earlier in the year when snakes may be encountered "sun-bathing" and may be more sluggish.

**Frequency of exposure**

- to hazard:** Very frequent from March to October
- Risks:** Poisonous bite
- Likelihood:** Unlikely
- Possible result:** Shock, pain, and possible loss of consciousness
- Likely seriousness:** Injury resulting in three-day absence

**Measures to reduce risk:**

Wear stout boots (with ankle protection) and gaiters to protect lower legs.

Keep a sharp lookout, especially in the circumstances described in the notes above, to avoid stepping on or disturbing an adder.

**Measures to reduce the effect:**

Seek immediate medical attention.

### 10. Ticks

Notes: Ticks present a special hazard in the countryside since they may carry Lyme Disease. They are tiny spider-like creatures, which live in woodland, moorland and grassy areas. Ticks cling to the ends of vegetation and attach themselves to passing animals or humans.

Lyme Disease is a bacterial infection, which can affect the skin and occasionally cause serious illness of the nervous system, joints or heart. The disease may first show itself between three and thirty days after infection as an expanding round reddish rash in the area of the bite. Early symptoms may resemble influenza with swollen glands near the bite, mild headaches, aching joints and tiredness.

#### Frequency of exposure

**to hazard:** Very frequent from July to August

**Risks:** Bite

**Likelihood:** Unlikely

**Possible result:** Rash, flu-like symptoms, joint pains, headache.

**Likely seriousness:** Serious long-term illness if left untreated.

#### Measures to reduce risk:

Wear long trousers (tucked into socks) and long sleeved top, to cover legs and arms.

Ticks can be seen more easily on light coloured clothes.

When working in tick infested areas inspect the body for ticks every few hours, and if possible strip completely to inspect for ticks at the end of the day's activities.

Remove any ticks using tweezers, twisting anti-clockwise and upward.

#### Measures to reduce the effect:

Seek immediate medical advice if symptoms occur.

**11. Wild Animals**

Notes: There are many indigenous wild animals that may be found in the countryside, but they are mostly small mammals and pose no direct threat to humans. Most are retiring animals and it is unlikely they would hold their ground when approached. They can, however, carry diseases and any bite or contact with their excrement could cause infection.

Some wild cats have been reported in remote areas of the country but no attacks on humans have been reported.

(See also **RATS** Section 8)

**Frequency of exposure**

**to hazard:** Very infrequent

**Risks:** Sudden confrontation, bites, scratches, contact with excrement.

**Likelihood:** Unlikely

**Possible result:** Emotional trauma, pain, infection

**Likely seriousness:** Injury requiring medical attention

**Measures to reduce risk:**

Keep a sharp lookout for animal movements. Avoid contact with animals and their excrement. Do not disturb their dens or interfere with their young.

**Measures to reduce the effect:**

Seek medical attention for any serious injury. Keep inoculations up to date.