

Disclaimer: The advice in this guide is considered to be correct at the time of writing, but Red Squirrel Resources accept no liability for actions inspired by these resources. You are responsible for creating your own risk assessments, here you will find considerations that may be relevant for your situation. Each Risk Assessment created should be specific to your site and the individuals in your group.



SITE RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

SITE LOCATION: Generic Site / School Site / Farm Site

ASSESSOR:

DATE:

HAZARD	RISK TO STAFF & PARTICIPANTS	RISK LEVEL H/M/L	EXISTING CONTROLS. FURTHER ACTIONS	New RISK LEVEL
Rough terrain : steep slopes, animal holes, uneven ground, wet ground	Slips, trips, falls	M	Appropriate footwear to be worn. First aid provision. Inform participants of risks.	M
Water bodies: pond, streams etc	Hypothermia, drowning	L	Children to be supervised by adults when in close proximity of the stream. Appropriate first aid provision and emergency action plan in place.	L
Adverse weather High winds, rain	Hypothermia Falling trees or limbs	M	Check weather reports when possible. All to have appropriate clothing : waterproofs, boots. Staff to have map reading/compass skills. Avoid woodland activities in high winds.	L
Hot weather	Sunburn, dehydration, sunstroke.	L	Check weather reports when possible. Staff to advise on sun protection measures, clothing and need to drink water. Provision of shade / shelter where needed.	L
Insects, ticks	Bites, stings, Lyme disease. Anaphylactic shock.	L	Repellent used and appropriate clothing. First aid provision. All advised on tick removal and symptoms of Lyme disease. Records kept of individuals with known allergic reactions.	L
Plants	Stings, rashes, scratches, poisoning.	L	Strict attention to positive ID of wild foods. Appropriate clothing. Good personal hygiene. First aid available.	L
Soil/water borne diseases	Tetanus. Leptospirosis, E. coli.	M	Risks made known to participants Good personal hygiene, handwashing with soap and water.. All water to be suitably treated.	L
Existing medical conditions	Forgotten medicines, reoccurrence of conditions	M	Staff to be aware of medical conditions, e.g. information on booking form to be carried by leaders. First aid kit available.	L
Old fly-tipped metal, broken glass, barbed wire and other rubbish.	Cuts, puncture wounds	M	Participants to be warned of key areas where dangers are present and urged to proceed with caution. Group to agree to protocol. (The most hazardous rubbish has been removed from the site, but some pieces may remain).	M
Agricultural machinery	Cuts, bruises, broken bones, falling	M	All machinery to be cordoned off in an out-of-bounds location, tools safely stored out of reach of children where possible. All participants to be given an orientation tour of the site to be clear on boundaries and hazards.	L
Livestock (cows/sheep/chickens)	Bites, pecking, diseases, collision	M	Any contact with livestock to be followed by handwashing. All participants to be given instructions on how to interact with animals respecting their space. Walking through fields with livestock, all to stay as one group along the perimeter of the field.	L
Wild animals (badgers, foxes)	Fox bites - rabies	L	Awareness of animals and the hazards. Any participants getting close to animals would have instruction / orientation to the hazards involved	L
Trees / structures	Falling from trees, breaking bones, bruises, cuts, sprains	M	Any climbing to be in suitable trees / structures as agreed by group leader. Health of trees monitored closely. Supervised and assessed by staff depending on who's care the child is in.	L

Risk level = likelihood x severity. High, medium or low.

All activities, games and crafts to be brought to groups in an age and stage appropriate manner

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Other Considerations:

Along with your site Risk Assessment and Activity Risk Benefit Analysis documents, you are responsible for having developed an **Emergency Action Plan** in order to respond effectively to any such emergencies, serious accidents and injuries.

For all groups, adequate provision of industry appropriate, First Aid qualified staff (IOL Band 3 compliant, such as ICT 16hour Outdoor First Aid qualification). It is generally understood that First Aid Qualifications expire 3 years after the date of last training, however you need to check this with your trainers and to be in alignment with what is appropriate for your group and setting.

It is recommended that all Forest School Leaders, Nature Mentors or Outdoor Educators update their practice as often as possible through CPD and training opportunities.

Some trainings vary and may not have included aspects that others do. It is good to be aware of the need for a woodland management plan (reviewed annually). It is also good practice to develop a policy around minimising detrimental ecological impact so that we are looking after our sites and all those who live there for the longevity and health of all projects.

Other policies to consider developing include:

- First Aid
- Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Woodland Management Plan
- Minimising detrimental ecological impact

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Risk Assessment Considerations – Blindfold Activities

Activity Assessed: Activity Location: Assessed By:					Date: Next Assessment Due:		
Type of Hazard	Likelihood of Occurrence	Hazard Severity	Risk Factor	Action to be taken to reduce risk	New Likelihood of Occurrence	New Hazard Severity	New Risk Factor
Slips, trips, scratches / puncture wounds, bruises, sprains	3	3	9	Staff to assess appropriate levels of blindfold activities based on group’s behaviour and receptivity. Any individual behaving in a way that could compromise their wellbeing, their participation in blindfold activity to be discontinued. High ratio of those without blindfolds supervising activity.	1	3	3
Concussion	2	4	8	Whenever blindfold activities are taking place, a high ratio of staff or responsible participants with eyes open to supervise and care for those exploring their other senses.	1	4	4

Responsible adult to supervise at all times. Suitable ratio of trained adults to persons with tools. No activity may be carried out where there is an individual Risk Factor of 10 or above.

Benefits and opportunities: expanding other senses; slowing participants pace down which often has a deeply calming effect; developing relationship with the natural world with senses beyond sight can create more intimate connection to the natural world and to themselves; blindfold activities involving a partner or small group can develop deep trust in each other and a sense of closeness within the group.

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