



HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

The Council would like you to enjoy your allotment. However, the following guidance will be given to all tenants to ensure that they are aware of the possible hazards on an allotment site, so that they can take steps to ensure that they, other people, and wildlife, are not put at risk. It is your responsibility to consider taking out public liability insurance to cover occupation of your allotment.

Please read the following guidance for health and safety on your allotment. This document must be read in conjunction with your Allotment Tenancy Agreement.

1. Your Personal Safety

If you are going to spend time on your own at the allotment site, let another person know where you are going and what time you will be back. If you have a mobile telephone, ensure that it is charged and take it with you so that you can call for help if necessary. Be aware of your surroundings and anyone else on site at all times.

Ensure that you pay attention to where you are walking at all times. The ground may be uneven underfoot, and items may have been accidentally left on paths. Particular care should be taken not to trip.

Be aware of the effect of changing weather conditions - rain or frost may affect walking surfaces and make them slippery. Sunscreen should be used to protect yourself from over exposure to the sun.

Ensure that you lock all gates behind you as you enter, if such gates are expected to be permanently locked.

2. Specific Risk to Children

Be aware that children can be present on the allotment site at all times. Ensure that you have safely locked up any chemicals and that they are in properly marked containers. They should not be kept in drinks bottles or other food containers, or left lying around the plot. You should ensure that there are no

hazardous items present on your allotment plot that children may come into contact with.

If you bring children onto your plot, ensure that you have carefully reviewed your plot before they enter to ensure that there are no items present which may cause them harm. Children must be supervised on allotments at all times and you must ensure that they do not go onto other people's plots without permission.

3. Safety of Others

If you have someone join you on your allotment, particularly if they are not used to being on allotment site, please ensure that you make them aware of the issues regarding health and safety contained within this document.

4. Physical Exercise

Working on your allotment can be physically demanding. Please take care when working on your allotment, and contact your doctor if you have any concerns with your ability to do such physical exercise.

5. Hazardous Items

You should ensure that there are no hazardous items left on your plot. Such items could include broken glass, tangled wire, metal stakes that are left in unexpected places, unexpected large holes, weed cover over hidden objects.

If you discover a significant amount of rubbish or hazardous items, such as asbestos sheeting, underneath the soil once you have taken over your allotment plot, then please contact the Council, who may offer assistance in removal.

Tools can be a hazard if they are not properly stored, or are left lying around the allotment plot when not in use, for example, an upturned fork which people may step on.

6. Tetanus or Lockjaw

Please ensure that you have been vaccinated against tetanus. This is a serious infection caused by bacteria that live in the soil, which can enter your body through the slightest wound or cut on the skin.

7. Skin Irritations

Reduce the possibility of skin irritation by wearing gloves and clothing which fully covers the skin. Be aware of which plants can cause skin irritations.

8. Pesticides and Fertilisers

Ensure that you have safely locked up any chemicals and that they are in properly marked containers. They should not be kept in drinks bottles or other food containers, or left lying around the plot. Ensure that you wear suitable

clothing and follow all the manufacturer's instructions on their use. All items must be disposed of responsibly. You should ensure that the chemicals are not accidentally spread to your neighbour's plot, as your neighbour may be gardening organically. All chemicals or pesticides used should comply with current laws and regulations, and should only be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

9. First Aid

You may wish to keep a first aid kit in your shed to provide you with items for first aid, for example to help with small cuts or removing thorns or splinters.

10. Use of Your Own Machinery

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions, and pay particular attention to the whereabouts of other tenants or children whilst you are using the machinery.

11. Use of Council Machinery

If you make use of Council machinery you will need to sign the machinery disclaimer form and read all the necessary safety guidance. You will also need to be trained by the site representatives and follow the manufacturer's instructions at all times.

12. Control of Legionella

Legionella bacteria can cause disease, including legionnaires disease, which is a severe form of pneumonia and can be fatal. People can become infected when they inhale aerosols (airborne water droplets) from a contaminated source. It can affect anyone, including children, but some people are at higher risk, such as those over 45 years of age, smokers or those with alcohol or drug dependence, those suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease, or diabetes, lung or heart disease, and those who have a weakened immune system or are taking drugs that weaken the immune system. Conditions favouring the proliferation of the bacteria include water which is at a temperature between 20°C and 45°C, or the presence of any nutrients or slime which encourage the bacteria to grow.

The symptoms of legionnaires disease include a high temperature, feverishness and chills, cough, muscle pain and headache, and can lead to pneumonia. Symptoms might also include diarrhoea and signs of mental confusion. A different respiratory disease can also be caught from handling compost and soil containing the bacteria Legionella Longbeachae.

Minimising the Risks from Legionella

The following are some simple precautions that should be taken when watering plots:

- On hot days run the tap for at least a minute, and longer if necessary, to ensure that any water held in the system is below 20°C, while keeping your face away from the spray.

- Empty the water out of garden hoses after use and store them out of direct sunlight.
- All watering cans and pressurised watering containers should be emptied after use and kept clean at all times; watering can roses, the spray heads for pressurised watering vessels and hose spray nozzles should be cleaned and descaled on a regular basis.
- Keep water butts/other water storage vessels clean by emptying them and thoroughly scrubbing them clean inside, at least on a 6 monthly basis to minimise possible bacteria proliferation.
- Try to avoid splashing water around when watering pots/containers.
- Be aware that when using stored water, in water butts or other storage containers, which has reached a temperature above 20°C, there is a potential risk of contamination with Legionella bacteria. This risk is increased if you create aerosols using this water, for example by using watering cans or pressurised watering containers.
- Consider disinfecting your water storage containers when you clean them, and consider insulating them to lower the temperature inside in warm weather.
- Water storage containers should have properly fitting lids, which are not made of wood, to prevent contaminants entering the water and prevent the encouragement of algae growth from sunlight.
- Hosepipes attached to standpipes and coiled hose reels should be removed and drained after use to prevent possible stagnation of water left within them. Hosepipes should not be left within stored water in order to prevent back syphonage to the mains water supply.
- Do not keep excessive amounts of stored water, as this will help prevent stagnated water.

The following are some simple precautions that tenants should take when using potting compost/soil:

- Wear gloves whenever handling soil, compost, fertilizer or pesticides.
- Do not open bags of compost/potting media with your head directly over the bag.
- Fold over the top of the compost bag when not in use.
- Avoid potting up in a confined space and ensure adequate ventilation if carrying out this task in a green house or shed.
- Moisten dry potting media before use.
- Dampen down dry compost heaps before turning or using.
- Avoid storing potting media /compost in greenhouses as these will heat up and may encourage Legionella.
- Consider wearing a dust mask when turning compost heaps and handling potting media/compost or other dusty materials.
- Always wash your hands after gardening and especially before eating, drinking or smoking. Keep a hand sterilizing gel in your shed/greenhouse if soap and clean water is not available.

13. Risk of Other Diseases

You are responsible for basic hygiene on your allotment and for checking that your tetanus boosters are up-to-date. If you eat or drink on your allotment.

Always ensure that you wash your hands thoroughly first with soap and clean water, or make use of a hand sterilising gel.

Always make sure that you wash your fruit or vegetables thoroughly before eating them.

14. Rats

Rats can carry many diseases, including Weil's disease, which can cause death through contaminated water. Ensure that your compost bins are covered and that no remains of fruit and vegetables are left out to attract rats. Report any signs of rats to Bishopstoke Parish Council - it is then your responsibility to call in a pest control contractor, or pest control officer from Eastleigh Borough Council, to treat rats if nests are located on your allotment. If the tenant is deemed to be at fault then the Parish Council will seek to recoup their costs from the Tenant.

15. Bees, Wasps and Hornets

Report any bees, wasps or hornets to the Council. The Council will arrange for treatment for any wasps or hornets. Honeybees will be safely relocated and bumblebees will be safely protected on your allotment plot, with safe relocation only if there is no other option.

16. Wildlife

Please be aware of specific hazards for wildlife on allotments. This can include pre-stacked bonfires, litter, fruit netting left lying about. Some species are specifically protected, for example slow worms. In addition, before using strimmers or lawnmowers please check for hedgehogs in the area about to be cut.

17. Bonfires

Bonfires should only be lit when necessary, and tenants must attempt to keep the frequency of bonfires to a minimum. **Bonfires should only take place after 6pm when British Summer Time applies and after 4pm during the remaining part of the year.** Check your bonfire for wildlife before lighting it.

Only clean and dry material of vegetable origin should be burnt. On no account should materials from outside the allotment be brought onto the site and burnt. Burning should only take place when the wind is blowing in a suitable direction which will not carry smoke towards any neighbouring properties. Check weather conditions to ensure that you will not encounter significant wind.

Bonfires must not be left unattended or left to smoulder. Tenants must ensure that before leaving the bonfire it has been completely put out.

The environmentally friendly alternative of composting should be carried out where possible. Alternatively, green garden waste can be disposed of at Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Guidance agreed: 27/09/2022