



Health & Safety Guidance Notes River / stream water sampling

These guidance notes outline good practices in term of health and safety when collecting water samples from rivers/streams/brooks in line with a risk assessment carried out in collaboration with the Health and Safety service at University of Warwick. The risk assessment took into consideration hazards related to general potential sites of sampling (i.e. rivers, streams, brooks – slippery banks, water flow, chemical and biological hazards), the surrounding environment (e.g. presence of hazardous plants), weather conditions (e.g. bad weather, visibility) and environmental damage.

Please read carefully the following instructions before going sampling to limit unnecessary risks

Your Responsibility and Risk Assessment

It is your responsibility to consider your own health and safety and the health of others around you before undertaking any sampling. You should consider the health and safety hazards associated with the sites you plan to visit to collect the water samples and any individual circumstance or medical conditions that might expose you to risks. It is your responsibilities to ensure that practical precautions are applied to minimise risks and avoid putting yourself or others in danger.

Your safety is our priority

If after your risk assessment it is not safe for you to sample, you are under no obligation to continue with the sampling.

The information provided by the University of Warwick on this guidance notes is for general information purposes only. All information provided on these guidance notes are in good faith. It provides an outline of good practice in terms of Health and Safety when collecting water samples. The use or reliance on these instructions contained is solely at your own risk. Under no circumstances shall the University and its staff have any liability to you for any loss, or damage of any kind when sampling a river/stream/brook.

Health & Safety Guidance Notes - River / stream water sampling

DOS



- Go sampling with someone
- Inform someone else that you are going sampling (including your approximate location)
- Go sampling during the day when there is good visibility
- Go sampling when there is good weather and no flooding
- Only sample from publicly accessible sites
- Choose a safe and steady site where you can easily and safely collect water with the provided sampling kit where there is no plant species which may cause harm (e.g. nettles)
- Avoid steep riverbanks, muddy and slippery sites or strong flow streams / rivers – visual check before going down the bank
- Approach river/stream/brook where the flow is slow - determine flow using a branch (e.g., Poohsticks to determine speed)
- Stay on the river/stream/brook bank while sampling
- Wear sensible footwear and clothes for the site you are visiting (e.g. long trousers, long-sleeves top, walking boots)
- Cover all existing cuts/abrasions with waterproof plasters
- Wear gloves when handling the river samples for your own protection and not to contaminate the sample (i.e. disposable nitrile gloves provided)
- After handling the samples and before consuming food/drink, disinfect your hands with some hand sanitiser and/or wash your hands at the nearest facility
- Take the sampling kit waste with you and dispose of it in the general waste bin

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DON'TS



- Do not go sampling alone
- Do not go sampling at dusk/night
- Do not go sampling if there is bad weather and/or there are weather warnings
- Do not go sampling if it is flooding and do not sample from flooded rivers
- Do not sample from private sites or trespass private properties to reach a site
- Do not enter areas where there are many hazardous plant species present
- Do not enter in the water for sampling
- Do not drink from any water courses during sampling
- Do not ingest any plant species during sampling
- Do not touch eyes, nose, mouth when sampling
- Do not sample if you do not feel comfortable about the sampling procedures and/or the site chosen
- If during the sampling process the kit is faulty, gets damaged and inoperable or you lose part of it, please do not try to recover or use it, if it is not safe to do so. We appreciate your efforts and willingness to participate in the study, but your safety comes first. Instead of taking any unnecessary risks, please request a replacement kit on the online submission form.
- Do not litter the site you are visiting with our sampling kit waste; please take it with you and dispose of it in the general waste bin.

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