

Health and Safety Plan Form

A critical consideration in any water monitoring program is the safety of all participants. All volunteers should have with them a copy of the Health and Safety Plan when they go into the field.

Field safety checklist

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| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitiser |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone (fully charged) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sun screen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal locator beacon | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm clothes, rain gear, spare dry clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking stick (for balance in the stream) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food and water | <input type="checkbox"/> Pick-up tool for rubbish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety gloves | <input type="checkbox"/> Torch or headlamp for night work |

To fill out prior to leaving for the site

A. List the names of everyone in your group (at least two), noting those with first aid training (at least one)

B. List the emergency telephone numbers and medical information such as allergies, diabetes, epilepsy for everyone participating in field work in case there is an emergency. Include any medications that someone may need and where to locate them.

C. Leave your location details, names of all people involved in the monitoring, known medical conditions, and your expected return time with a contact person. Ensure they know what to do and who to contact if you do not return on time. Write the name and phone number of the person expecting you to come back below, including your expected return time and the plan if you do not return.

Contact person (name and number) _____

Expected return time _____

What they will do if you do not return _____

D. Locate the nearest hospital or clinic and write down directions for traveling there.

E. Write a description of your field location or locations that can be used to direct paramedics to you in case of an emergency. In the case of an emergency get someone to wait by road and direct emergency services to problem.

F. What are the predicted weather conditions and river flow conditions for today. What is the expected temperature, rainfall, wind speed, sun protection alert and expected pollen levels? How much rain has there been in the last 48 hours?

To fill out at the site

- No safe access to the stream – can you access the water without stepping off a steep or eroding bank? If not, find a better site or ensure that stream entry is carried out in pairs. Use a walking stick to steady yourself while entering the stream
- Presence of slippery rocks – is the stream bed covered with periphyton that could cause you to slip? Walk your reach along the bank and identify areas where walking could be dangerous. Have someone on the bank ready to assist you if you need help.
- Deep pools – are there areas of the stream that are above knee depth? Can you see the stream bed? Some portions of the stream may be covered with silt and you won't know how deep it is. Use a stick to test the depth and steady yourself. Walk your reach along the bank and identify areas too deep to enter. Have someone on the bank ready to assist.
- Swift water – are there areas of swift water above the knee? Walking in these areas could cause someone to fall. Walk your reach along the bank and identify these areas.
- Floods - Do not enter the stream if it is in flood. Monitoring some variables during floods may be possible, but only from a bridge or using a pole sampler.
- Hazardous items – Beware of hazardous items, particularly in urban streams, such as broken glass, medical waste, building rubble, discarded chemicals, or sharp items. Be aware of sites that are contaminated with sewage or faecal pollution.
- Working at night – Use a torch or headlamp and take special care when placing your feet.
- Lack of cell phone reception – do you have cell phone reception so you can call for help? If not, identify where you have to go to get reception. This may require driving somewhere. Consider carrying a personal locator beacon
- Parking – is your vehicle blocking traffic? Be careful crossing roads to access your sampling site.
- Chemicals – have you reviewed the safety instructions in the chemical test kits? Are you familiar with safe disposal methods for chemicals?
- Bacteria – are you familiar with safe handling procedure for bacteria?

Before leaving the site

- Wash your hands with soap and water or antibacterial gel
- Properly dispose of all wastes from test kits
- Decontaminate equipment.

This is just one example of a Health and Safety Plan that you may want to expand to ensure it fits your needs. Whitebait Connection, a freshwater community conservation education programme, has Health and Safety Templates on their website (www.whitebaitconnection.co.nz).

For more information about Health and Safety check out the Worksafe New Zealand website at www.business.govt.nz/worksafe

For first aid tips check out the St John website at www.stjohn.org.nz