

Glenlivet Estate
Health & safety information for group leaders

Visits to the Glenlivet Estate provide excellent opportunities for wildlife and land management studies, but supervisors need to be aware that there are a number of potential hazards that students may be exposed to.

INSURANCE COVER

The Crown Estate has its own third party insurance cover to cover for visitors to the Glenlivet Estate. Teachers/leaders however, need to be aware that they are responsible for the supervision of their group at all times, and need to check their local education authority/governing body insurance cover and the regulations covering outdoor visits.

GUIDELINES

During a visit to the Glenlivet Estate, students may be exposed to hazards presented by the following:-

- Exposure to working forestry machinery
- Exposure to farming operations
- Rough/slippery ground conditions
- Contact with poisonous/rash inducing plants/fungi
- Contact with insects which are vectors of disease
- Contact with stinging/biting insects
- Snake bite (adder)
- Contact with soil/water borne organisms that may cause disease
- The effects of certain weather conditions including sunburn, extreme heat, extreme cold and exposure

** The risks associated with these hazards are generally very small and should not detract from the enjoyment of a visit **

A few simple precautions will help reduce these risks to an acceptable level. Leaders are therefore asked to take note of the following guidelines:-

1. Forestry machinery

Groups are sometimes taken to see working forestry machinery during a visit. To reduce the risks associated with falling trees and machinery parts, supervisors should ensure that:

- Students are aware of the serious risk of injury presented by machinery.
- Students should always follow the directions of the forester/estate staff on site
- Staff nor students must not approach within 15m of a working machine
- Students must not touch machinery parts (such as the harvesting head) even when these are switched off and being shown to them
- Students must not climb on timber stacks

2. Farm visits

Groups are sometimes taken to onto working farms during a visit. To reduce the risks associated with farm visits, farm machinery, and potential infection (see point 4) supervisors should ensure that:

- Students should not enter pens or enclosed area where livestock are present
- Students should avoid making loud noises/gestures which may startle livestock
- Some farms may require all visitors to walk through a disinfectant foot bath on entering and leaving the farm – please ensure all group members are aware of this and have appropriate footwear on
- Students should keep away from all machinery – whether working or static
- Students and staff should follow good hygiene practice – during the visit students should not put their hands in their mouths or rub their eyes and **it is essential that hands are washed THOROUGHLY after a visit and/or before they eat any food.**

3. Rough / slippery ground conditions

Students can occasionally be injured by tripping/slipping on rough ground or they can receive skin/facial injuries from branches/prickly vegetation. Supervisors are therefore asked to ensure that:

- Students are aware of the potential risk of injury.
- Stout footwear is advised, with non-slip soles.
- Students should be made aware of the risks of misbehaviour /tom-foolery when encountering muddy/difficult ground conditions / walking in woodlands.

4. Contact with poisonous or rash/disease inducing plants/fungi or other items

During a visit, students may pick up and handle plants and fungi or other items that they find, or touch fences/gates etc where livestock are present. Weil's disease (Leptospirosis) is transmitted by rat's urine. While the vast majority of the items groups are likely to encounter on a visit will cause them no harm, supervisors should ensure that to avoid potential infection, particularly gastric upset:

- Students are aware of the risk of handling plants/fungi and other items they may collect.
- All cuts and abrasions must be covered with a waterproof dressing before the visit.
- Students do not put their hands in their mouths or rub their eyes after they have handled any plants, fungi, animals or other items.
- Students do not eat any plants/fungi or put them in their mouths.
- ***It is VITAL that all students wash their hands THOROUGHLY following a visit and/or before they eat any food/lunches.***
- ***If groups intend to picnic while out on the estate then supervisors must ensure they bring an adequate alternative method for cleansing hands e.g. cleansing gel / wipes.***
- Students do not throw plants/fungi or other items at each other in fun.
- Students do not handle dead animals.

5. Contact with insects which are vectors of disease.

While the risks associated with insect borne diseases in this country are relatively low, there is one particular disease, Lyme's disease that students may be exposed to during a visit. This disease is transmitted via sheep and wild animal ticks and to minimise the risks supervisors should ensure that:

- Students are aware of the risks associated with tick bites
- Exposed skin is kept to a minimum
- Clothing is checked for ticks following a visit
- Any ticks found are removed immediately
- If students suffer a tick bite and/or experience joint pains/flu' symptoms, they should consult a doctor who should be informed that they have been on a countryside visit.

6. Contact with stinging/biting insects

Depending on the time of year of the visit, students may be exposed to wasps, bees or other stinging or biting insects during a visit. While a sting or bite from these insects will generally only cause discomfort for most people, some individuals can suffer extreme allergic reactions following an insect bite/sting. Supervisors should therefore ensure that.

- Students do not disturb or aggravate insect nests
- Any student that suffers an insect bite/sting during a visit is treated according to first aid guidelines and is monitored carefully.
- Ranger staff should be notified beforehand if any student present in the group is known to suffer severe adverse allergic reactions.

7. Snake bite (adder).

The only snake found in Scotland is the adder. This snake is a protected species and has a poisonous bite. While a bite from an adder is rarely fatal, children and some people may suffer a severe adverse reaction following a bite. Adders are found on the Glenlivet Estate but they are shy creatures and are rarely seen. They will usually disappear very quickly into cover if they are disturbed and only generally strike when frightened. Supervisors should therefore ensure that:

- Students are made aware about the risks from adder bites
- Students should be told not to handle adders if they find or come across one.
- Local doctors maintain supplies of anti-venom and any person suffering an adder bite should be treated according to first aid guidelines and removed to the local health centre/hospital immediately.

8. Contact with soil/water borne organisms that may cause disease

There are several diseases or gastric upsets that may be caught from water or soil dwelling organisms including Weil's disease (see above, section 4). Dead and decaying animals may sometimes also be present in water courses. Supervisors should therefore ensure that the guidelines as outlined in section 3 above are followed and in addition:

- Students are made aware of the risks of soil and waterborne infections/disease
- Students do not drink water from burns, streams or ponds.

9. The effects of certain weather conditions including sunburn, extreme heat, extreme cold and exposure.

Students can be taken to a variety of locations on the Estate during a visit and depending on weather conditions and time of year, may be subject to exposure to extreme heat or extreme cold, or be vulnerable to sunburn. Supervisors should therefore ensure that:

- Students are made aware of the risks of skin exposure to the sun
- Skin exposure is kept to the minimum where the risk of sunburn is high
- Students are properly equipped for the activities they will be undertaking and have adequate clothing for the prevailing weather conditions.

Please note that ranger staff are first aid trained and carry first aid kits with them during group visits.

If you would like any further information or wish to discuss any of the items mentioned here, please contact;
Glenlivet Estate Office and Information Centre, Main Street, Tomintoul, Ballindalloch, AB37 9EX.
Tel 01479 870070 Fax 01807 580319 Email: info@glenlivetestate.co.uk