



Biosecurity

Upper and Lower Medway IDB

Policy and Procedure to reduce the spread of invasive species and diseases while at work

Version 1.0

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Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the act of attempting to control the spread of invasive plants, diseases and animals through policy and procedure. The purpose of this document is to outline the key points of biosecurity in relation to Board activities. The failure to control the spread of invasive species and diseases may have detrimental effects on the surrounding environment, making containment and eradication considerably harder. The Boards recognise not only the importance of biosecurity in its activities, but the wider role it plays in maintaining our local wildlife balance.

The Upper and Lower Medway Internal Drainage Boards are committed to constant improvement of biosecurity within its control, and on receipt of information that a location has invasive species present, will follow the procedures below.

Policy

The Boards will ensure that biosecurity is a featured part of the planning of works.

The Boards will provide suitable means to enact the procedures listed below where practicable.

The Boards will work with the Clerk and Works Supervisor to produce advice and information on the importance of biosecurity, and actively encourage all staff, contractors, and public it encounters to adhere to the provided guidance.

The Boards understand that failure to act responsibly towards biosecurity may result in prosecution under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Where necessary, the Board will report all breaches of biosecurity to the Environment Agency and any other local partners as required.

Biosecurity Procedure

Advice relating to identifying invasive species, reporting and how to help prevent the spread to be distributed to staff by Works Supervisor and Clerk.

Staff are to be confident in identification and given support from the management to report findings.

On leaving the depots each day, staff should have their invasive plants information with them.

Should a member of staff identify an invasive species, they are to report directly to the Supervisor, who will in turn seek appropriate professional assistance.

The area is to be avoided and labelled as a risk to reduce the chance of propagules (small pieces of plant) being transferred between sites.

Where work is necessary on sites with identified biosecurity risks, staff should operate the Check, Clean, Dry method. This applies to all tools, plant, PPE and equipment that may have come into contact with the contaminant.

Should it be impractical to fully dry items in the field, the PPE should be dried on return to the depots in the provided drying cabinets.

Tools used on biosecurity sites should receive their daily maintenance and be cleaned prior to being used again, especially when moving sites.

Plant that has been used should be cleaned and pressure washed (where practicable), to avoid transfer of propagules between sites.

Contractors should be made aware of these procedures and provide their own biosecurity documents prior to starting work on sites suspected on being contaminated.

Sites identified as being contaminated are to be assessed by the Works Supervisor and an appropriate ecology professional.

Once the removal method has been identified, the Works Supervisor will ensure this is carried out and a report submitted.

Cleaning of Tools, Plant, PPE, and Vehicles

There is a certain need for common sense and vigilance on the part of both the Board and the staff when dealing with biosecurity. The Boards acknowledge that in the field, it is very difficult to maintain full biosecurity, especially in wet weather. It is however reasonable for the Boards to expect its staff to carry out biosecurity measures to the best of their ability and to report any instances where there is concern surrounding invasive species. The following guidance will help staff in their attempts to control the spread of any contamination.

- Assess your surroundings and make it your business to be familiar with invasive species you might encounter.
- Document, photograph, and report findings while in the field. This may allow the Works Supervisor to aid in the appropriate cleaning need.
- Keep dry and wet kit separate where possible. Kit suspected of being contaminated should be kept away from other PPE and tooling.
- Avoid driving in fields or on stewardships that are suspected of being contaminated.
- Clean tooling in the field as well as practicable, taking time to rinse any areas suspected of being contaminated.
- If moving to a new site, check and re-check plant, tools, vehicles, and PPE for debris that may be contaminated.
- Request disinfectant is provided should you believe the site you are attending is contaminated. Any disinfectant that is running low should be reported to the Works Supervisor via your requisition sheets.
- Where possible, large plant should be cleaned and dried on site, making special effort to blow out radiators and remove mud and debris from the wheels and chassis.
- At the end of the day, wet clothing should be hung in the drying cabinets and any attached debris discarded.
- Boots should be cleaned in the boot dips as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Reporting of Invasive Species

Reporting of invasive species is an important step to allow suitable bodies to eradicate or control the problem as close to the source as possible. We recognise that efficient reporting combined with the above procedures will aid in keeping risk of spreading invasive species low.

The IDB has created an electronic form that the staff can use to document the location of invasive species that are found. This form can be completed on a mobile device or computer, which allows greater accessibility.

This document has been approved by the member of each Board who is designated for biodiversity issues, in conjunction with the Clerk and Works Supervisor. It is to be reviewed every 5 years at most.