



Infrastructure Projects

Southern



ENVIRONMENTAL Toolbox Talks

May 2016



Toolbox Talks

1. Adders and the dangers of snake bites
2. Badgers
3. Bats
4. Cement and concrete
5. Giant hogweed
6. Great crested newt
7. Himalayan balsam
8. Japanese Knotweed
9. Nesting birds
10. Waste hierarchy



Infrastructure Projects Southern Toolbox Talk

Adders and the danger of snake bites

03 May 2016

Did you know?

- Adders are the only venomous snake native to Great Britain. They are extremely widespread and can be found on some of our construction sites
- They are unlikely to bite unless they are alarmed or disturbed; bites can be painful but are rarely fatal
- Adders are protected by law from being killed or injured



What is the danger?

Only 10 cases of human death from an adder bite have been recorded in the last 100 years. However, although an adder's venom poses little danger to a healthy adult human, the bite is very painful and requires urgent medical attention.

Bites appear to happen when adders are surprised and they don't have time to retreat.

How do I recognise an adder?

- A stocky snake, the adder is easily identified by the dark zigzag line passing along the back bordered by rows of spots
- The adder is typically active during the day when it hunts, mainly for small mammals
- The adder hibernates in winter, typically from September/October to March

What are the symptoms of a bite?

- Pain, redness and swelling in the area of the bite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness and fainting

Seek urgent medical attention

Do

- ✓ If you see an adder, stop work and report it to a supervisor
- ✓ The adder should be left to move of its own accord
- ✓ Any harm or injury that does occur to an adder must be reported
- ✓ In the event of being bitten by an adder, seek immediate professional medical help

Do not

- ✗ Injure or harm the snake in any way – this is illegal
- ✗ Handle adders – if this is necessary leave it to trained professionals

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Badgers

03 May 2016

Did you know?

It is illegal to carry out any construction work close to a badger sett (burrow) without taking steps to positively avoid damage and without an appropriate licence from Natural England.

How can you identify a badger sett?



- A badger sett entrance is usually D-shaped and at around 300 millimetres wide by 200 millimetres high
- There may be signs of freshly excavated material at the entrance or piles of leaves, dry grass, straw or bracken, which the badgers take inside to use as bedding.

Why does this matter?

Badgers are protected and so are the setts they live in. Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, in England and Wales it is an offence to:

- Willfully kill, injure or take a badger or attempt to do so
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger
- Dig for a badger
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a badger sett, or obstruct access to it
- Cause a dog to enter a badger sett
- Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett

This can lead to fines of up to £5000 per badger or up to six months in prison

Do

- ✓ Immediately stop work and report any badger sett found on site or close to the site boundary
- ✓ Seek guidance from a competent person before any work within 30 metres of a badger sett

Don't

- ✓ Carry out any works that are likely to disturb, damage or destroy a badger sett
- ✓ Use heavy machinery within 30 metres
- ✓ Use light machinery within 20 metres
- ✓ Work within 10 metres of a badger sett without checking whether a licence is necessary

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Bats

03 May 2016

Did you know?

- **In the UK all species of bat are protected by law**
- They tend to return to the same roosts each year, and these sites are also protected whether bats are present or not



Where can they be found?

- They can be found in holes/cracks in trees, roofs, walls of houses and buildings, under bridges, in underground caves and old railway tunnels. Bats can crawl into holes only 15 millimetres wide
- Look out for bat droppings – dark brown/black, about four to eight millimetres in length – crumble easily
- A strong odour and large numbers of moth wings discarded by feeding bats may also be present near a bat roost
- They are commonly found under railway bridges, in viaducts and signal box roofs

Why does this matter?

It is a criminal offence for anyone without a licence to:

- Kill, injure or handle a bat
- Be in possess of a bat (whether alive or dead)
- Disturb a roosting bat
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not

This can lead to fines of up to £5000 per bat and/or up to six months in prison

Do

- ✓ If a bat or a roost is found stop all works in the area immediately and report it

Don't

- ✗ Touch or handle a bat as they are very delicate and this can cause them serious harm – it is also against the law
- ✗ Disturb any place used by bats, whether they are present or not



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Cement and Wet Concrete

03 May 2016

Did you know?

Cement and wet concrete are highly alkaline and very corrosive



If cement or concrete is allowed to enter a watercourse in an uncontrolled manner, it can have a devastating effect on wildlife.

What you must never do

- Hose down spills of concrete or cement into watercourses, gullies and drains.
- Allow washout water to flow into watercourses, gullies or drains.
- Allow ready-mix trucks to washout anywhere other than in areas designated for the purpose.
- Wash off any tools or plant in watercourses.

Why does this matter?

- Water contaminated with cement is highly alkaline and can be toxic to fish, plants and animals living in watercourses. Cement particles entering a watercourse can clog fishes' gills and destroy their spawning grounds
- It is illegal to allow cement, unset concrete or washout water containing cement to enter a watercourse or drain
- Permission is always needed before construction can take place in a watercourse

A 'Working with wet concrete' toolbox talk that includes the danger to individuals, PPE requirements and first aid is also available on the website

Do

- ✓ Be aware of all gullies, watercourses and drains before starting work
- ✓ Store bulk and bagged cement additives at least 10m away from gullies, watercourses and drains
- ✓ Undertake mixing or batching works well away from gullies, watercourses and drains
- ✓ Ensure gullies, watercourses and drains are protected from any concreting works
- ✓ Ensure special mixes are used for underwater concreting works
- ✓ Use designated areas for concrete washout and ensure concrete delivery drivers are aware of this .
- ✓ Protect nearby drains against washout water running into them
- ✓ Report immediately any concrete spillages or concrete washouts

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Infrastructure Projects Southern Toolbox Talk

Giant Hogweed

03 May 2016

Did you know?

Giant hogweed sap contains toxic chemicals which react with light when in contact with human skin, causing blistering within 48hrs



How is it identified?

- The stem starts growing in March/April and is green, but develops dark red/purple spots or blotches during summer. It is hollow, furrowed or ribbed and has sparse spiky hairs
- Leaves are dark green, have deeply cut lobes with ragged edges, can be one metre across and form in a rosette
- Flowers are white, umbrella like and up to 500 millimetres across and appear from June in the fourth year

Why does it matter?

- **Environmental harm:** the plant endangers the survival of native plants and this may lead to excessive erosion of soil as the giant hogweed dies back in winter. It can also cause significant harm to grazing animals
- **Prosecution:** it is illegal to plant or otherwise encourage the growth of giant hogweed. This includes moving surrounding soil that may contain either seeds or plant material unless as part of an eradication process
- **Health Hazard:** the plant contains large amounts of poisonous sap that, on contact with the skin and in the presence of sunlight, causes severe irritation, swelling and painful water blisters. This reaction can occur up to 24 hours after exposure to sunlight. Contact with eyes can cause temporary blindness

Do

- ✓ Immediately stop all work near to any plant you suspect may be giant hogweed
- ✓ If you come into contact with the sap, cover the affected area to prevent a reaction with sunlight. Wash with soap and water and seek medical advice

Do not

- ✗ Enter an identified area of giant hogweed during treatment
- ✗ Excavate or move soil that may contain seeds or other plant material
- ✗ Stockpile material suspected to containing giant hogweed within 10 metres of watercourses, gullies or drains.
- ✗ Move plant through Giant Hogweed

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Great Crested Newts

03 May 2016

Did you know?

- **Great crested newts and their habitats are protected by law**
- The great crested newt is the largest and the rarest of the three species of newts found in the United Kingdom
- Numbers have been declining rapidly over the past 30 years due to loss of habitat



Where can they be found?

- Ponds and very slow moving watercourses (spring to autumn)
- Woodland, scrub, hedgerows, rough grass land, piles stone/ballast and derelict sites surrounding ponds and watercourses

Why does this matter?

- It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture, trade or even to disturb a great crested newt
- Or to damage, destroy or obstruct habitats where great crested newt live or breed

This could lead to a fine of up to £5000 per newt and/or up to six months in prison.

Do

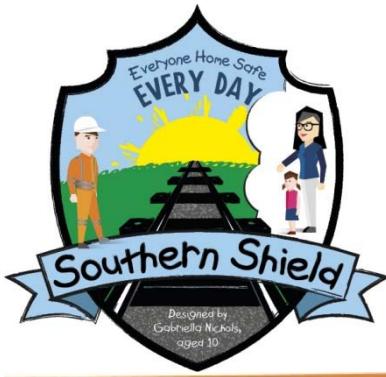
- ✓ If you think that you have seen a great crested newt then stop work and report this to your supervisor
- ✓ Keep a careful look out when moving logs, stones or rubble or clearing a site near to ponds as these are favourite habitats for great crested newts

Do not

- ✗ Try to touch or otherwise disturb any great crested newts you come across
- ✗ Move log piles or rubble on site if great crested newts are present.

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Himalayan Balsam

03 May 2016

Did you know?

Himalayan Balsam is one of the most invasive species in the UK as it dominates habitats, grows densely and shades out native plants

- It thrives because each plant produces more than 500 seeds before it dies in the autumn. When the seed pods are ripe, the slightest touch causes them to burst open catapulting and dispersing the seeds up to seven metres away
- It is often found growing along rivers, disused railway lines or in similar linear corridors



How is it identified?

- It grows up to 2.5 metres during spring to autumn
- The stem is pink/red, hollow, sappy and brittle. Leaves occur in two's or three's from the same point on the stem. They are spear shaped with serrated edges, shiny and dark green with a reddish mid-rib.
- Flowers, which are similar to a Foxglove or a large Busy Lizzie, are purplish pink, carried on long stalks and appear from June to October.

Why does it matter?

It is illegal "to plant or otherwise encourage" the growth of Himalayan Balsam. This could include cutting the plant or roots and disturbing or moving surrounding soil that may contain root material unless as part of an eradication process.

Do

- ✓ Immediately stop any work within seven metres of the suspect plant and report it

Do not

- ✗ Enter an area of Himalayan Balsam during treatment
- ✗ Disturb the seedpods.
- ✗ Excavate or move soil that may contain seeds or other plant material without specific instruction
- ✗ Stockpile any material suspected of containing Himalayan Balsam within ten metres of gullies, watercourses or drains



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Toolbox Talk

Japanese Knotweed

03 May 2016

Did you know?

- Japanese Knotweed grows 20 millimetres a day forming dense clumps over three metres high, which crowd out native plants.



- The plant spreads rapidly because any fragments of its stem or root will grow to form a new plant (a piece as small as 0.8 grams can regenerate) making it very difficult to eradicate.
- Japanese Knotweed grows in any type of soil and is often found along railways, river-banks, roads and particularly on derelict sites it can grow through joints in tarmac and mortar

How is it identified?

- It forms dense clumps and grows up to three metres tall; the stem is hollow, looks like bamboo and breaks easily
- In spring it is fleshy and red tinged and in summer it is green with purple speckles
- Flowers are cream coloured and appear in drooping clusters towards the end of August; the plant dies before November often leaving behind the upright brown, hollow, woody stems

Why does this matter?

- **Environmental harm:** it kills native plants by producing a dense canopy of leaves. Although not toxic to humans or animals, it offers a poor habitat for insects, birds and mammals
- **Prosecution:** it is illegal "to plant or otherwise encourage" the growth of Japanese Knotweed. This could include cutting the plant or roots and disturbing or moving surrounding soil that may contain root material unless as part of an eradication process
- **Structural damage:** the plant is strong enough to grow through foundations, walls, roads and drainage pipework

Do

- ✓ If you suspect Japanese Knotweed stop all work within seven metres and report it

Do not

- ✗ Enter an identified area of Japanese Knotweed during treatment
- ✗ Excavate or move any soil from within 7m of a Japanese Knotweed plant without instruction
- ✗ Stockpile material suspected to containing Japanese Knotweed within 10 m of watercourses, gullies or drains
- ✗ Move plant through any area containing Japanese Knotweed

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Toolbox Talk

Nesting birds

03 May 2016

Did you know?

It is illegal to kill or disturb birds or damage their nests or eggs

- While birds usually nest in trees or hedges they can also be found nesting on the ground, in equipment, amongst materials, in cabins, under eaves or behind drain downpipes
- All birds are protected when nesting and work must be stopped



When is bird nesting season?

Most birds tend to build nests and lay their eggs between March and July. The peak months for breeding are May and June. However, some birds can nest all year round.



Why does this matter?

- A **fine of up to £5000** may be given for each offence, each bird may be deemed a separate offence
- Any vehicle that is involved in the damaging or destruction of birds, their eggs or their nests, may be forfeited

Bird nesting surveys must be carried out before work commences and any active nests clearly marked with an exclusion zone.

Do

- ✓ Check that no nesting birds or active nests are present before carrying out site clearances of potential nesting sites
- ✓ Stop all construction and work in the immediate area if nesting birds are present
- ✓ Report the presence of nesting birds to a supervisor

Do not

- ✗ Kill, injure or capture any wild bird
- ✗ Take, damage, destroy or disturb a nest or eggs of any wild bird
- ✗ Move any machinery, scaffolding or equipment if birds are found nesting

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Waste Hierarchy

03 May 2016

Did you know?

Construction generates a very large amount of waste annually with a sizeable proportion of material simply thrown away without being used. The true cost of waste is more than just the disposal cost. It is made up of:

- The original purchase price of the material
- Unloading, handling, storage and transporting of the material
- Reloading, moving and storing waste on site
- Disposing of the waste including tipping charges and landfill taxes
- Replacing damaged and wasted materials

You can minimise waste by...

1. Prevention

- ✓ Store materials neatly to avoid damage and loss
- ✓ Think of ways to reduce waste
- ✓ Reduce the amount of waste created on site
- ✓ Keep materials in their packaging to protect from damage

2. Prepare for reuse

- ✓ Keep significant offcuts for use elsewhere
- ✓ Reuse materials until no longer fit for purpose such as fencing
- ✓ Reuse materials for alternative purposes

3. Recycle

- ✓ Always recycle materials where possible
- ✓ Segregate different waste types
- ✓ Store waste in appropriate skip/container until removed from site
- ✓ Ensure skips are labelled clearly
- ✓ Add 'housekeeping' to site checklists
- ✓ Clear up when work is carried out

4. Other Recovery

- ✓ Consider other recovery such as energy recovery

5. Disposal

- ✓ When all other options have been considered, disposal of the waste to landfill



Do not

- ✗ Put waste materials into the wrong waste container
- ✗ Open new cans or pallets before the ones in use are empty
- ✗ Leave materials unprotected and where they are likely to be damaged by, for example, rain or mud
- ✗ Burn or bury waste – it's illegal
- ✗ Mix different types of waste – it prevents recycling
- ✗ Leave materials at risk from site traffic movement

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**EVERYONE HOME SAFE
EVERY DAY**