

Safety and operating procedures



1. Risk management and safety

The most important thing in doing any environmental monitoring is your safety. EstuaryWatch Coordinators are committed to the health, safety and welfare of all EstuaryWatch volunteers.

To ensure volunteer safety the EstuaryWatch Coordinator will:

- register the contact details, personal health details relevant to monitoring tasks and the emergency contact details of all EstuaryWatch volunteers
- undertake a risk assessment of all monitoring sites to inform volunteer induction
- induct all EstuaryWatch volunteers in safe monitoring procedures and risk management when travelling to and when at monitoring sites
- update risk assessments annually and volunteer contact and personal health details as required.

It is essential all volunteers undertake this induction and register with the EstuaryWatch Coordinator before undertaking any EstuaryWatch community estuarine monitoring.

Once you have undertaken the induction it is your responsibility to ensure you are familiar with your monitoring site, understand your monitoring tasks and any safety procedures you need to undertake. It is also important to follow recommendations delivered within the induction process on managing health and safety incidents while undertaking EstuaryWatch monitoring.

Monitoring methods outlined in this manual are appropriate for regular monitoring and for monitoring during irregular events. More care should be taken when monitoring during irregular events as unusual weather conditions may compromise access or safety at a monitoring site. If, at any point, safety is not assured while monitoring, the EstuaryWatch monitor should cease monitoring immediately and leave the site in a safe manner.

In addition, if you are unsure of safe operating procedures while conducting EstuaryWatch monitoring, do not hesitate to contact the EstuaryWatch Coordinator. **If a volunteer sustains an injury during the course of EstuaryWatch monitoring or experiences a near miss, even minor, it must be reported to an EstuaryWatch Coordinator as soon as possible.** Preferably this should be done via telephone and an accident/incident report form should be completed and submitted to the coordinator.

Below are some tips for improving safety and identifying risks. These are only general tips and do not replace the EstuaryWatch Volunteer induction:

- always work in pairs
- always let somebody know where you are going and what time you expect to complete your monitoring
- due to the dynamic nature of estuaries, situations may arise where it is unsafe to access monitoring sites, e.g. during flood conditions. If this is the case, **DO NOT** attempt to access the sites
- always wear footwear and clothing suited to the monitoring sites you are visiting
- if possible, carry a mobile phone and a first aid kit
- take food and water
- when sampling from a canoe or boat, make sure you have and use all required safety equipment and understand and comply with the Victorian Recreation Boating Safety Handbook. For more information see the Victorian Maritime Safety Guidelines www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety
- if sampling from a road bridge, wear bright reflective clothing to ensure you are easily seen and be very wary of road traffic
- check tide timetables before going monitoring to avoid being trapped by rising or falling tides

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- keep the list of emergency phone numbers in your Field Monitoring Kit.

For more tips on improving safety and identifying risk, refer to the EstuaryWatch and Waterwatch Safe Work Methods Statement (SWMS) which can be found at Appendix B.

If at any point you feel uncomfortable about the conditions of the monitoring site or your surroundings, immediately stop monitoring and leave the site. Your safety is more important than data!