

## Safety Plan for Oyster Restoration Volunteers

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To the volunteers:

Your safety is critical. We have made every effort to make this a safe activity, but ultimately you are responsible for your own safety. Safety precautions can never be overemphasized.

Please follow these guidelines:

- Wear appropriate footwear. It is imperative that you wear shoes which protect your entire foot (absolutely no sandals, crocs, or flipflops). Boots which will protect your ankles are preferable but tennis shoes are acceptable for most situations.
- Wear appropriate clothing to protect you from sun, insects and scratches from oyster shells.
- Use the safety gear which is available including gloves and safety glasses. Arm protectors will be issued if needed.
- Please inform the event leader if you have any allergies or medical conditions.
- Keep hydrated. Water is provided.
- If you become excessively hot or tired, stop immediately. Seek shade and water. Ask for assistance if needed.
- Watch for wildlife, insects (such as ticks), hornets, and wasps. Know what to do if you get bitten or stung.
- Watch for poison ivy, poison oak, sumac, and other types of vegetation in your area that can cause rashes and irritation.
- If working by boat
  - Wear your issued life jacket at all times while on the vessel.
  - Keep hands clear when leaving or returning to the dock.
  - Wear protective eye wear to guard against flying shell pieces.
  - Remain seated while the vessel is moving
  - Follow all instructions from the boat captain
- If working on the shoreline
  - Stay in the assigned work area. SC shorelines can have treacherous mud, sudden drop-offs and other hidden dangers.
  - Do not walk in soft mud if at all possible
  - Do not walk on live oysters
  - Keep your gloves on at all times. Wear long pants to protect your legs from oysters.
  - Never wade in swift or high water.

These guidelines have largely been taken from the US Environmental Protection Agency's website on volunteer monitoring ([www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/)).

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To the Event leaders:

- Email the volunteer safety rules to participants in advance.
- Print the volunteer safety rules and ask the volunteers to read them prior to beginning.
- Enforce clothing rules (especially re shoes)
- Have all safety gear and water available
- Check first aid kit prior to event and refill if necessary
- Make sure all volunteers sign waiver. Require volunteers to provide an emergency contact telephone and information on medical conditions.
- Assess physical condition and assign volunteers to tasks which are suitable
- Explain what we will be doing and point out the safety rules. (Volunteers cant follow rules they don't know about!)
- Do not allow volunteers to make up their own way of doing things. This causes confusion and can lead to accidents.
- Issue safety gear as appropriate: gloves (always), arm protectors (when moving bags), safety glasses (when moving bags or on the boat), life vests (on the boat)
- Water should be provided at each work location. If the work crew will be in more than one venue (e.g. dock and shoreline) then have more than one water container. Gatorade is preferable in very hot weather.
- Have a cell phone available in case of emergency.
- Have first aid kit on hand (remember to carry multiple first aid kits if the work group will be split between locations!). Know any important medical conditions of team members (e.g., heart conditions or allergic reactions to bee stings). It is best if at least one team member has first aid/CPR training. Always rinse any oyster shell cuts with an antiseptic wash to prevent infection.
- If using a boat make sure it is fully equipped with all necessary safety items as required by the Coast Guard.
- Make sure each volunteer wears a life jacket when onboard the boat. Do not take no for an answer.
- Water should be on the boat in case of an unexpected emergency.
- Listen to weather reports. Never take volunteers in the field if severe weather is predicted or occurs while at the site.
- If transporting volunteers in a DNR vehicle, require them to wear seat belts.
- Follow all driving safety rules and safe boating rules.

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### First Aid Kit

The minimum first aid kit should contain the following items:

- Telephone numbers of emergency personnel such as the police and ambulance.
- Disinfectant
- Several band-aids for minor cuts.
- Antibacterial or alcohol wipes.
- First aid cream or ointment.
- Several gauze pads 3 or 4 inches square for deep wounds with excessive bleeding.
- Acetaminophen for relieving pain and reducing fever.
- A first aid manual which outlines diagnosis and treatment procedures.
- A 2-inch roll of gauze bandage for large cuts.
- A large compress bandage to hold dressings in place.

Make sure to have a cell phone available in case of emergency.