



Open Water Safety Policy



Parks & Nature Conservation

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and Wellbeing

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STEVE HOLLINGWORTH
SERVICE DIRECTOR
SPORT, EVENTS, OPEN SPACE AND WELLBEING

Within parks and public open spaces of Birmingham there are a range of open water features which enhance the environment for the enjoyment of people of all ages. These range from large lakes, pools, rivers, SUDs through to tributaries which flow from small streams into fast flowing rivers like the River Cole.

These natural features however present a significant risk to persons in summer when it is hot and swimming in cold water is attractive; and in winter when children and young people are attracted to and may put themselves at risk by walking on ice over deep water.

Parks & Nature Conservation in its risk assessment process will do all that is reasonably practicable to protect people from danger, this policy has been established and refined over many years with this objective in mind. We will continue to bid for resources into the maintenance and management of open water. However, budgets are limited and as major schemes are implemented through the City Councils Capital Programme or other capital funding that is subject to a bidding process.

If you have any suggestions to improve water safety at one of our sites please let us know. Please write to me at the address below or telephone our Safety Section on 303 2420.

Steve Hollingworth

Service Director
Sport, Events, Open Space and Wellbeing
PO Box 2122
Margaret Street
Birmingham
B3 3BU

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Date: February 2018

Water Safety Policy

Statement of Intent

The Strategic Director will, through the Assistant Director Sports Events Open Space and Wellbeing provide appropriate management arrangements and take measures to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, all open water facilities and other areas of open water such as culverts, rivers and streams, are maintained in a safe condition for the benefit of users.

Birmingham City Council "Parks & Nature Conservation" does not support or

of vegetation and natural vegetation will provide adequate and aesthetic protection.

Steep gradients

Where a steep gradient slopes down into open water, dense vegetation should be allowed to grow naturally or planted to prevent visitors reaching the water.

Shallow gradients

Where the edge is not steep, the risk of falling into the water is reduced. However, to deter swimmers, planting of water plants (reeds, willow etc) may assist in discouraging persons entering the water at these points.

Beach treatment

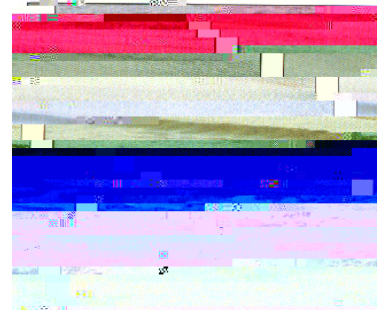
A further measure which may be deemed necessary if the above treatments fail to effectively deter bathers, is to lay any tempting 'beach' areas (i.e. shallow gradients) with 3 inches of ballast which, by its sharp edges makes access barefoot very painful. When any alterations are undertaken to open water facilities the overall recommendations within this policy must be taken into consideration as the work could have an effect on the information, education and supervision of the facility.

Design Facilities Adjacent to Open Water

When facilities such as play areas, external recreational or sporting facilities, walkways or planting areas etc which are adjacent or near to water, are to be developed, careful consideration of both design and maintenance will be made in accordance with the Construction, Design and Management Regulations.

The siting and design of such facilities will be jointly planned and prepared by the Assistant Director Sports, Events, Open Space and Wellbeing or nominated officer for (Parks & Nature Conservation), the District Parks Manager or other nominated officer, (Parks and Nature Conservation Safety Advi

Environmental Management



Where a risk assessment has previously identified areas known to be attractive for swimming, additional signs, normally positioned at main entrances to the site in addition to those displayed within life buoy stands, will be positioned at regular intervals around the water's edge as determined by the risk assessment.

As an addition a site specific Open Water Risk Assessments will be undertaken as part of the site risk assessment process this will identify any specific additional water hazards inclusive of changing water levels. A checklist has been developed to assist risk assessors with this assessment. The assessment will be undertaken in June/early July each year before the school summer holidays.

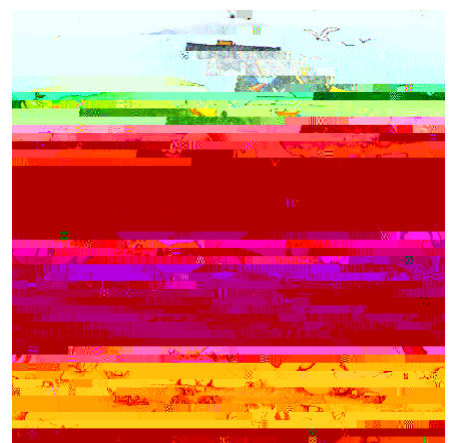
Safety Inspections/Hazard Identification

We will ensure that routine safety inspections are undertaken by the City's Service Provider or by officers of Parks & Nature Conservation. Additional inspections will be undertaken by the Local Services Safety.

Inspection of rescue equipment is carried out on a daily basis.

The results of all inspections will be recorded and records will be maintained by the District Parks Manager. At the request of the Parks & Nature Conservation Safety Co-ordinator ad hoc audits on the provision of rescue equipment will be undertaken by Parks and Nature Conservation Safety Advisor. Safety inspections will monitor:

- a) The provision of rescue equipment
- b) Safety signs and other information notices
- c) Condition of the water and surrounding edges/banks



supervision is not necessary. During summer months, staff working at larger sites with areas of open water will have special regard to any open water activities taking place.

In certain circumstances and when staffing levels and duties permit, the Ranger Service or other members of staff may take a proactive role in preventing access to areas of open water for unauthorised activities such as swimming. In recognising the importance of this as a means of educating members of the public,

Where programmed activities such as water sports, take place on areas of open water, the organisation responsible for the activity is required to make adequate arrangements for ensuring the safety of all participants and spectators.

Rivers and Brook Courses

In circumstances where rivers or brookcourses run through parks and public open spaces under normal conditions the depth of water is negligible, and only in flood conditions the risk to users of the site increases. It is not practical to sign or provide lifebuoys for all sites where rivers and brook courses flow, in the event of such storm or flood conditions the use of the local media shall be used to highlight the potential increased risk to possible users of these sites.

Rescue Equipment

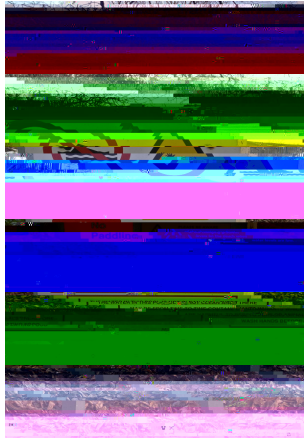
Parks & Nature Conservation will make available around all areas of open water, 24" life buoys in solid and highly visible mountings. The locations of the rescue devices will be determined by a risk assessment and will reflect likely points of access to the water and places where a rescue attempt may reasonably take place. However, after taking into consideration locations based on risk assessment, the guide shall be 1 lifebuoy every 200 metres, thus allowing reasonable time to locate and use such rescue equipment. Life buoys are often seen by members of the public as a key element in lifesaving. However, they are difficult to use over a distance, rather they invariably serve as a visual reminder of the hazards associated with open water. It is recognised that in spite of their role in rescue attempts and as a warning reminder, life buoys are also subject to vandalism and misuse.

Parks & Nature Conservation will ensure that the life buoys and housings are inspected on a daily basis by the City Council's service provider or other nominated

person the results of these inspections are recorded. Where vegetation around the lifebuoy stands is identified as an issue on inspections, this will be removed to ensure lifebuoy stands are visible from both sides. Where a shortfall in the rescue provision is identified, Parks and Nature Conservation will ensure that replacement equipment is made available as soon as possible after the shortfall is discovered. Where appropriate and as a result of the risk assessment, additional rescue equipment may be made available either on site or in a vehicle. We will ensure that all staff who may have access to such equipment will receive appropriate training as to its use.

Where persistent vandalism occurs the use of alternative anti vandal lifebuoy stands will be considered. Where persistent problems of vandalism to lifebuoys or where lifebuoys are stolen reasonable action will be taken daily to replace such equipment, allowing for one spare buoy per housing.

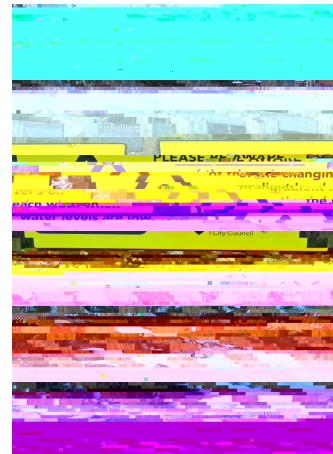
Provision of Information



Information Information is provided at principal points of access to facilities with areas of open water that gives details of the layout of the facility, provides a map (at larger facilities), displays principal warning signs in accordance with the recommendations of the RoSPA National Water Safety Committee and the requirements of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations inclusive of emergency telephone facilities or telephone numbers.

Warning Signs

Warning signs are in place at all main entrances, plus in specific locations further entrance warnings signs may be installed where a particular issue has been identified. All signs are in accordance with the recommendations of the RoSPA National Water Safety Committee are displayed in areas where there is a particular hazard. In addition, on particular sites supplementary signage may be installed where beach gradient levels may change with changing water levels. Additional further nagging signs/stickers are displayed in the centre of life buoy stands repeating entrance sign warning information.



Reporting Accidents and Incidents

Where a member of staff is involved in an incident or sustains injury as a result of an accident, the reporting of the accident/incident must be in accordance with Parks & Nature Conservation written procedures, a summary of which is included in Appendix 3.

Where a member of the public is involved in an incident or sustains injury through an accident and the accident/incident is witnessed either by a member of staff or the City Council's service provider, the accident/incident must be in accordance with the procedures in Appendix 3. Members of the public will be encouraged to report accidents/incidents to the Parks Ranger Service Control Room by use of the telephone number displayed on information boards at site access points.

First Aid Provision at Open Water Sites

Except where there is a permanent staff presence on a site where there are areas of open water and at which first aid provision will be determined by a risk assessment, no first aid provision is made.

First aid equipment, in accordance with the standards set out in the current First Aid at Work Approved Code of Practice, is carried on all Loc 13.92 TL T(E)-3.39556(x)9.71093(c)-0.29

Applications must be made at least 12 weeks in advance of the proposed activity/event. The event organiser will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the site's Normal Operating Procedures (NOP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP), as they relate to the activity, are incorporated into their own event information.

Copies of these documents will be made available to all staff either work at or will have access to a site with an area of open water and will be made available to any person or organisation wishing to use the site for an organised activity. (Details of the general contents of the NOP and EAP are contained in Appendix 2.)

- Use of Parks Application must be submitted.
- Environment Agency water tests must be taken on a regular basis also in advance of any open water swimming event regular water testing must be

Provision and Use of Boats and Other Craft

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1. Type of SUDS feature to be located in Public open space or Housing Amenity of other BCC land?

2.

Swale Underground tank Attenuation basin

Balancing Pond Rain garden Other (please state)

3. What is the maximum area of the feature in sq. m?

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4. What is the feature draining?

Surrounding Housing Surrounding Commercial or Industrial Run off from surrounding POS Other please state

5. What is the maximum flood depth of the feature?

Under 150mm 150 to 300mm 300 to 500mm 500 to 750mm

If above 750mm please state

6. How long will water be retained in the feature after a flooding event?

Up to 12 hours 12 to 24 hours More than 24 hours (please state)

If permanently please state the depth

7. What is the bed level of the feature?

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8. What is the reason for location of the SUDS feature within the POS ?

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9. What frequency of maintenance access will be required for the feature?

Weekly Monthly Annually

10. Who is to be responsible for the maintenance of the feature?

BCC Developer

11. How will the maintenance of the feature be funded?

Development Agreement Commuted Sum other please State

