**Risk Assessment (V2) for RFA Members Updated 19th January 2025.**

1. The RFA does not expect any person to do anything in the way of work, maintenance, bailiffing or similar, on any RFA water, but it is possible that individuals who are members of an RFA club might wish to do (entirely at their own risk) some simple bankside vegetation trimming using hand tools like a sickle or suchlike when they are fishing. No other person who is not an RFA member may do any work of any sort on any part of any RFA venue.

* It is very important that nothing is done which is liable to cause any sort of health and safety related problem for any person, and nothing should be done without the doer being competent, careful, and with proper consideration.
* The use by any RFA member or other person (other than those pre-authorised by the RFA’s General Administrator) of any powered equipment is specifically prohibited. Hand tools should not be shared.
* Before doing ANY work the RFA member should check first with their club to see if any particular hazards have been reported to them by the RFA.
* River and canal banks can be undercut, steep, muddy, wet, slippery and so on, and so it is imperative that all users of RFA waters take great care to ensure their, and others’, safety at all times.
* The abridged risk assessment shown here supports this advice and is put on the website as information to indicate to all RFA members **examples** of what they shouldbe aware of, to ensure safety is paramount at all times, since anyone simply enjoying a day’s fishing might well come across the same sort of potential hazards as those who already carry out voluntary bailiffing and water maintenance tasks on our collective behalf.
* This document is for reference of anyone undertaking minor works to make fishing convenient as outlined above. They might find they are accessing RFA fisheries which carry risks as indicated below, and others. It is not possible to list every potential risk, but those shown here give a very good indication of the sorts of things that members should ensure they are aware of and which they should try to avoid or, if avoidance is not possible, should be minimised.

2) Hazards might include:

* + The risk of drowning, or secondary drowning, cold water shock and hypothermia.
  + Water borne diseases such as Weil’s Disease.
  + The presence and activities of farm livestock. Contact / interaction with farm animals should be avoided.
  + Wet, rutted, slippery or other difficult conditions of any paths and banksides.
  + Use of equipment.
  + Hostile or difficult anglers or the general public.
  + Broken or damaged stiles, gates, and other farm infrastructure.
  + Inclement weather.
  + Vegetation which can cause injury in particular anything like giant hogweed, the sap of which can cause severe and lasting skin damage. Some common riverside trees, like blackthorn, have sharp spikes which can cause painful injuries. It is important that anyone accessing RFA venues makes themselves aware of what sort of vegetation that are fishing near and that they react accordingly. In the case of giant hogweed, for example, it should not be touched and certainly not cut down by anyone not suitably protected.
  + The use or construction of unauthorised dug-outs (eg steps / swims) cut into river banks.
  + Eroded/ undercut banks caused, for example, by water movement, especially on rivers.

3) Anyone undertaking such activities should minimise the associated risks where possible and should not knowingly or carelessly put themselves or any other person at any risk of injury or harm.

* + If the weather is inclement, or if the member has any concern at all about movement onto or along any fishery, they should not proceed.
  + If a gate or stile is damaged, they should not use it.
  + Fences should not be crossed other than via open gates. Take great care when near any electric fence, especially anyone with a pacemaker.
  + They should not go so close to the water’s edge so that if they were to slip they might cause themselves or others any injury. Avoid entering or overhanging the water edge to recover damaged or lost tackle, including wading into the water.
  + Make sure someone else knows where they are going and what they plan to do.
  + Keep a means of personal communication eg mobile phone with them.