

Sanitisation Policy

Policy type	Year	Approved by
Operational	2020	Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Directors/ Poutokomanawa

The hazard of human infection for those exposed to water bodies has been known for a long time, but the public is becoming more aware of it as new evidence of the oceans rapidly deteriorating health emerges. Even the most pristine sea waters are inhabited by large numbers of microbes. The sheer volume of seawater and its constant movement usually dilute foreign microbes below concentrations necessary for human infection. Risk of direct infection by microbes from seawater is very small. However, the risk increases significantly in warm, brackish waters, in waters proximate to sewage and run-off inlets, at places of animal access and at populated beaches. Microbes generally infect humans through ingestion, inhalation or mucous-membrane exposure (naturally occurring or in wounds).

Microbes can infect through injured skin, the ears and the mucosa of the mouth, eyes and nose. If equipment is not properly cleaned, dried and stored after use, colonies can grow and microbes can reach sufficient numbers to infect users. Divers are encouraged to disinfect equipment properly. Make sure to use a cleaning agent that does not contain hydrocarbons and refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for use. (Source <http://www.alertdiver.com/Microbial>)

EMR snorkel equipment sanitisation

- Instructions for care of equipment and what to do with the snorkel equipment after use will be given verbally to the participants by the coordinator, including the use of de-fog or equivalent product (no spitting in masks). This instruction will also include information on where to put used masks, snorkels and wetsuits when finished (so that used masks and snorkels do not get mixed up with sanitised ones).
- Snorkel briefing will include a reminder for participants not to use our wetsuits as a toilet.
- The mask and snorkels must be sanitised after every single use, by soaking in a sanitisation product, we recommend [DX50](#)
- Whenever possible allow the mask and snorkel to dry completely in the sun (one hour max, do not leave in sun for prolonged period). Especially important for mask and snorkels to be completely dry for winter storage
- If undiluted disinfectant accidentally gets in the eye, flush with fresh water

- It is recommended that participants suitably cover any exposed wounds with suitable dressing or refrain from snorkel diving.
- If you suspect that someone urinated or had an accident in the wetsuit, leave the suit to soak for 10 or more minutes (in a separate bin) and then rinse several times in freshwater and leave to dry.
- Wetsuits should dry on a line in a secure site, once dry; they must be stored in a lockable area, they should be placed on hangers during long breaks in use.
- Fins should be rinsed in freshwater before storing for long periods and should not be left in the sun when not in use.

General public health advice:

- Regularly disinfect surfaces;
- wash and dry hands,
- cough into elbow,
- don't touch your face;
- stay home if you're sick,

WBC Gear Sanitisation and Biosecurity

Protect New Zealand's waterways

We need help to stop freshwater pests reaching – and spreading within – New Zealand. Freshwater weeds can form dense mats, completely smothering waterways and badly affecting water quality. The mats can also kill native plants, cause flooding and disrupt recreational activities.

SNEAKY LITTLE BUGGERS

Stealth is the main way these freshwater invaders travel. Sometimes a stream is infected but the pest isn't visible yet, so unaware, we spread the organism somewhere else. These pests can start off microscopically small – just one drop of water on a bike spoke or one damp tramping sock can be its way in. Once you're in the habit, it's not hard to stop them spreading – it just takes a bit of dedication to the cause. Protect your patch – check, clean, dry.

Prevent the spread

Freshwater weeds are easily spread by people, diggers, boats and fishing equipment. Many of them grow from small fragments, rather than from seed. Before using your gear in a waterway please:

CHECK for plant fragments and pests

CLEAN using detergent (5% dishwasher) or salt water (sea strength or 5% salt) until completely soaked through
DRY completely to kill freshwater pests.
Tell the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) about it



For more information about freshwater pests, or to report something unusual in a waterway, please contact MPI on 0800 80 99 66.

WHAT ARE THEY?

The list of invasive plants includes didymo, hornwort, lagarosiphon, salvinia and hydrilla. Please visit [MPI's website](#) for more information on freshwater pests.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

- Form mats over waterways, affecting water quality
- Endanger fish and crowd out native species
- Create drowning risks for people and animals
- Aesthetically damage our clean, clear waterways
- Have significant economic impact
- Make recreational activities in the waterway difficult
- Block dams and irrigation systems

FOLLOW THESE STEPS FOR EVERYTHING THAT'S BEEN WET, WHEN YOU MOVE BETWEEN ANY WATERWAYS IN NEW ZEALAND.

- Remove any plant matter. Check anything that's been in contact with the water, especially things like the tread of your shoe.
- Soak or scrub your equipment in water with detergent for at least a minute. Make sure the item is fully wet – without air-pockets or bits the water can't get to.
- Wait till the equipment is dry to touch, and leave it dry for at least 48 hours to make sure any invisible pests are completely dead.

CLEANING TIPS

- If you're cleaning something made of absorbent material, soak it for longer to make sure it's wet right through.
- Tip the cleaning water out well away from waterways. If you can, use a biodegradable detergent, and make sure it's safe for your equipment too.
- Freezing until solid is an effective alternative to cleaning.
- Use quick-dry or non-absorbent equipment where you can – you'll save on drying time.
- If there are two different waterways you use frequently; it might be easier to have a separate set of gear for each.
- For more cleaning tips go to www.mpi.govt.nz.

WHICH STEPS WHEN?

- I'm only using one waterway Great – you don't need to Check, Clean, Dry.
- I have several days between using one waterway and using another – CHECK AND DRY
As long as your gear is clear of plant debris and has been dry to the touch for at least 48 hours, you're ok.
- I'm moving between waterways – CHECK AND CLEAN
This is the prime time for spreading pests. Check and clean every item that has been wet. If possible, leave to dry as well to be really sure.

If you ever catch pest fish as part of your stream studies you **MUST NOT** return them to the stream – it is illegal. You **must** dispose of them humanely – either put them in the freezer straight away if possible or 'release them' onto the grass away from the waterway and try to squish or iki (spike into brain) them quickly to minimise any suffering.

Kauri Dieback

Background: Kauri dieback can kill kauri of all ages. It's a disease caused by a microscopic fungus-like organism, called *Phytophthora agathidicida* (PA). Kauri dieback spreads through the movement of contaminated soil and soil water. It is possible that it is also spread by streams and rivers particularly in times of flooding.

There's currently no proven cure or treatment and nearly all infected kauri die. The disease is easily spread through soil movements e.g. when soil is carried on dirty footwear, animals, equipment and vehicles. A pinhead size of soil is enough to spread the disease.

Guidelines for Whitebait Connection (adapted from www.kauridieback.co.nz)

AVOID

- working or holding events around kauri where possible (events, planting, survey work)
- leaving formed tracks
- Working in wet conditions
- Propagating or planting kauri - if particular projects require this, follow best practice guidelines

Prevent the spread. Arrive clean - leave clean. Scrub, Spray and Stay

Hygiene practices and how to clean equipment

Ensure all equipment is clean and soil-free - Boots, spades, or any other equipment which has been in contact with any soil - be also mindful of equipment like stakes for fish traps!

Kauri dieback spores can be removed from footwear and equipment simply by scrubbing them with clean water to remove all soil then allowing gear to dry. However, it is also recommended to use Sterigene to increase the effectiveness of these hygiene measures.

COVID-19

COVID-19, like the flu, covid can be spread from person to person. COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a type of coronavirus.

Traceability of all participants is recorded via supervisor forms, pre site assessment and school attendee list. We will sanitise public surfaces (ie: bathrooms) during delivery.

MTSCT has prepared guidelines for our coordinators, volunteers and contractors based on the government's and Ministry of Health's guidelines for what is permitted and recommended under the different Levels. Keep up to date <https://covid19.govt.nz/>