

# **Community Highways Volunteer Guidance**



**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

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## Introduction

This booklet has been designed to provide simple guidance to volunteers working alongside and on the highway. It provides information on where to find support if an incident occurs, as well as guidance to help ensure all volunteers remain safe whilst helping improve the local highways.

This guide is not fully comprehensive, individuals are responsible for their own safety and ensuring any tasks they undertake are within their own capability and skill set.

Safety is paramount for anyone working on or near the highway – if in doubt, STOP, and seek advice.

## Safety first

- Ensure you are safe!
- Ensure people can still pass by safely.
- Think about where you will store your equipment.
- Think about where you are going to store any arisings.
- Don't start something you can't finish.

## Key hazards and possible control measures

### Manual handling

Manual handling covers lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying, manoeuvring or transporting items.

It is important that anyone undertaking manual handling is aware of the correct method of undertaking manual handling.



The weight of an item is an important factor, but other factors should be considered, such as how many times you are undertaking the task, any twisting, bending, stretching or other awkward posture you may adopt whilst doing a task.

Where possible use a mechanical aid or split the load between two people. Always use good lifting techniques

## Control of substances hazardous to health

When working on the public highway, it is important for Volunteers to understand that many household substances are covered under COSHH.

The symbols below explain some of the more common ones, however no volunteer should be using a COSHH substance without undertaking a risk assessment and being suitably trained.

Users shall be aware of the safety requirements for product being used.

Keep product quantity to a minimum



## Working at height

Working at height regulations require: the avoidance of work at height where it is reasonably practicable to do so. This covers any work which if there were no precautions taken a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.

Volunteers should never use ladders or elevated platforms.

## First Aid

First Aid kits should be kept on site, volunteers should know where it is and be familiar with its contents and how to use them. In an emergency call 999 (or 112).

## Hospital Emergency Departments

Name and Address	Phone	Website
Royal Surrey County Hospital Egerton Road, Guildford, GU2 7XX	01483 571122	<a href="http://www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk">www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk</a>
East Surrey Hospital Canada Avenue, Redhill, RH15RH	01737 768511	<a href="http://www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk">www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk</a>
St Peters Hospital Guildford Road, Chertsey, KT16OPZ	01932 872000	<a href="http://www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk">www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk</a>
Ashford Hospital London Road, Ashford, TW15 3AA	01784 884488	<a href="http://www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk">www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk</a>
Epsom Hospital Dorking Road, Epsom, KT18 7EG	01372 735735	<a href="http://www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk">www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk</a>
Frimley Park Hospital Portsmouth Road, Frimley, Camberley, GU16 7UJ	01276 604604	<a href="http://www.fhft.nhs.uk">www.fhft.nhs.uk</a>
The Royal Marsden Hospital (Sutton Surrey) Downs Road, Sutton, SM2 5PT	0208 6426011	<a href="http://www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk">www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk</a>
St Helier Hospital Wrythe Lane, Sutton, Carsharlton, SM5 1AA	0208 296200	<a href="http://www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk">www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk</a>
Kingston Hospital Galsworthy Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7QB	020 8546 7711	<a href="http://www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk">www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk</a>

## Urgent care – Walk in Centre

Name and Address	Phone	Website	Opening times
St Peters Hospital Guildford Road, Chertsey, KT16OPZ	01932872000	<a href="http://www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk">www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk</a>	8am – 8pm, every day, 365 days a year
Woking Community Hospital Heathside Road, Woking GU22 7HS	01483 846 209	<a href="https://www.cshsurrey.co.uk/our-services/location/woking-walk-centre">https://www.cshsurrey.co.uk/our-services/location/woking-walk-centre</a>	Open 8am – 8pm, Monday- Sunday
Caterham Minor Injury Unit Caterham Dene Hospital, Church Road, Caterham, CR3 5RA	01883 837500	<a href="http://www.firstcommunityhealthcare.co.uk">www.firstcommunityhealthcare.co.uk</a>	Open 09:00- 20:00, Monday – Sunday
Haslemere Hospital Church Lane, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2BJ	01483 782334	<a href="http://www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk/adult-community-health-services/community-hospitals/minor-injuries-unit-miu-haslemere-hospital">www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk/adult-community-health-services/community-hospitals/minor-injuries-unit-miu-haslemere-hospital</a>	Open 09:00- 17:00, Monday – Friday (excludes Bank Holidays)

## Hand tool management

It is likely that many of the tasks you may undertake as a Community Highways Volunteer will involve using tools (this could include spades, brooms, pruning tools, rakes, wire brushes etc.).

Tools should be maintained in line with manufacturer's recommendations. It is important that before any works start, you assess the condition of any hand tool. This is to protect you, the user, as well as anyone else using the highway near to where you are working.

When you have finished using a tool, ensure that it is placed somewhere safe, where it will not create a hazard to highway users or your fellow volunteers.

## Transporting

- Never carry more tools than you can comfortably manage and always carry tools to your side with any spikes or blades facing down.
- Always keep a good distance from others when carrying tools in case you slip.

## Care when tools not in use

- When not in use tools should be laid flat with sharp edges and spikes facing downwards.
- Always keep tools in a central location (do not leave saws etc. hanging in trees bushes).

## Using tools

- Always use the right tool for the job and appropriate protective equipment.
- You should only use tools that you are familiar/competent to use (it is ok to ask for help).
- Always inspect your tool for damage before and after use.
- Always maintain a safe working zone, this should include the full length of the tool being used.

## Access and lone working

Ensure there is good access and egress to your work area, do not get yourselves in a place of no escape.

Volunteers should never work by themselves, ensure that you are always with another person.

## Other users of the highway

Path users shall at all times retain the right to pass, where this cannot be maintained they shall be escorted through the work area.

Volunteers should always be aware of their surroundings, they should not enter a live carriageway without appropriate traffic management. High visibility clothing shall be worn at all times.

# Infectious Diseases

## Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis or Weils disease is a serious and sometimes fatal infection that is transmitted to humans by contact with urine from infected rats and cattle.

Early symptoms can include a flu-like illness with a persistent and severe headache, which can lead to vomiting and muscle pain and ultimately jaundice, meningitis and kidney failure and possible death

### Prevention

- Clean and cover any cuts or breaks in the skin and always wear gloves when working.
- Always wash your hands and forearms before eating drinking or smoking and Avoid touching your face whilst working.
- In areas of heavy rat infestation consider extra controls such as disposable coveralls

### What to do if you think you have become infected

- Seek medical attention immediately, tell them the type of work you were undertaking and the location and report any suspected infection to your supervisor.

## Lymes Disease

Lyme disease is transmitted to humans by the bite of infected ticks. Symptoms include fever, headaches and fatigue, a rash at the site of the bite, often appearing as a bull's-eye.

If left untreated, it can affect the joints, heart and central nervous system and can cause long term irreversible damage to your health.

If you find a tick on your body do not attempt to remove it by squeezing its body. Remove the tick by holding the mouth parts with tweezers or leave it in place and seek medical attention.



If you have a suspected bite and the rash appears seek medical attention.



## Natural Hazards

There are a number of naturally occurring hazards when working on highway verges. These may include:

### Japanese knotweed

This is a noxious weed, which must be controlled. Volunteers should not cut this plant, but ensure they advise Surrey County Council of its location.



### Giant Hogweed

This is a very large plant which can cause blisters and a rash if touched. Volunteers should be aware of this plant, and avoid it, unless they are wearing specialist protective clothing.



### Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)

Oak trees are currently being inhabited by OPM. Initially nests are built between March and April, before hairy caterpillars appear from the nests and process up and down the oak tree.

The Caterpillars and nests, have hairs which can cause rashes and in extreme cases breathing difficulties.

Volunteers are advised to carefully check round Oak trees, and check for nests either in the tree or on the ground with fallen leaves.



# Underground Utilities

## Statutory Undertakers pipes and cables

The highway has many underground statutory undertakers pipes and cables. This can include water mains, gas pipes, street lighting electricity cables, and fibre optic cables.

It is critical that anyone working on the verges are aware of these potential hazards, and look carefully before they work for signs of cables, recent ground disturbance, or metal or concrete covers in the area.

If in doubt, stop work and contact Surrey County Council for further advice.



## Pipeline markers

In addition to general statutory undertakers cables and pipes, some parts of Surrey have a high pressure pipe line within it. The pipeline is clearly marked with a variety of makers, many of which are shown below.

Beware of working in the vicinity of any pipeline, and seek advice from Surrey County Council before planning works.



## Exposed cables

Some statutory undertakers apparatus may not be buried to the correct depth. It is important to be aware, that if a cable is seen or uncovered during the works, that all works are halted, until advice is sought from Surrey County Council. They will attend site and identify the owner of the cable.



## Vegetation works

### Overhanging vegetation

Trimming back overhanging vegetation can help passage along the highway and tidy up an overgrown area.

During March to August, special care must be taken to not disturb nesting birds. Check areas of vegetation for nests before cutting, particularly amongst dense scrub and ivy. Start lightly so if a nest is discovered, it can be left undisturbed.

From September to December, avoid cutting fruit and berry bearing branches unless absolutely necessary.

It is also important to ensure that any vegetation belongs to Surrey County Council and is not privately owned.

These conifers are likely to be private, and hence should not be cut by volunteers without permission of the householder.

Areas such as this can be emailed to: [highways.volunteering@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:highways.volunteering@surreycc.gov.uk), with a photo and a good location, and the local area team can deal with the overgrown private vegetation.

### Brambles & weeds

Check no fences or wire cables within the vegetation before you start work.

Beware of 'flying' debris as you undertake the works.

Avoid 'wild flowers' – wait to the end of season, unless it is a safety issue.

Ensure arisings don't block the highway – think about where to store them safely.

Hoe or use a stiff brush on weeds.

Look out for litter and sharps.



## General tree trimming

Trimming of most highway trees, in order to allow passage along the footway can be approved. Branches can be cut up to a maximum of 50mm in diameter.

It is important to cut the branches in such a manner as to reduce the risk of infection to the tree.

Prior to cutting any branches, consider the size of the branch, and the likely weight of it. Plan where it is likely to fall down, and ensure that a safe area is identified.

Do not stand underneath the branch to cut it, and be aware of the wind direction to avoid getting particles in your eyes. Consider cutting the branch into smaller chunks if it is very long.

When undertaking pruning of a tree, it is important to cut near the shoulder of the trunk & branch. Where a branch is heavy, it is advisable to first make an undercut and then cut down from the top of the branch to avoid splitting the branch or trunk.

## Epicormic growth

Is the annual growth that occurs on the lower part of the main trunk of the tree.

The growth can block the footway, and occurs mostly between May and August.

Volunteers may trim this new growth, but must ensure that it is as close to the main trunk as possible. Growth can be cut up to 3m in height, to ensure clear passage along the highway.

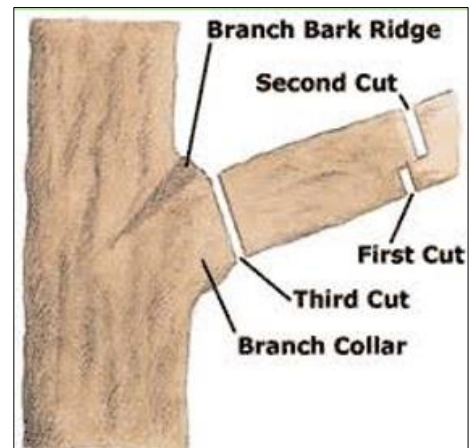
## Siding out footways

Ensure no cables are located high in the verge.

Kick back the edge of the verge to find the original path edge – a concrete or wooden edging strip is usually there indicating the edge of the footway.

Consider where to place the dug out grass – potentially further back into a woody area or removed from site.

Use straight lines to edge out the footway.



## Sign and Bollard cleaning

Cleaning signs and bollards can be undertaken with water and soft brushes or sponges, small amounts of household cleaner (e.g. washing up liquid) can be used if necessary.

It is important not to overreach when cleaning signs. Make sure that both feet are always on the ground.

Signs have a retroreflective covering to ensure they can be seen during low light. For this reason, it is important not to use chemicals or to scrub too hard when trying to remove dirt or detritus.

Water should be used sparingly, to prevent contaminated water being introduced to the ground water gullies or surrounding vegetation.

Before working on a signpost, give it a head to toe check. Ensure that it is not rotten and won't collapse if leant on. The back of the sign should also be checked make sure that the bolts and clips are in place and the sign will not fall.

Report any dangerous illuminated signs or bollards to 0300 200 1003. More information is on our website [www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks-and-maintenance/street-lights-traffic-signals-and-signs/street-lights/reporting-a-street-light-emergency#emergency](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks-and-maintenance/street-lights-traffic-signals-and-signs/street-lights/reporting-a-street-light-emergency#emergency)

## Before and after photos





