

# Health & Safety guidance for voluntary bat roost visitors: lone working

## What about lone working?

As a Voluntary Bat Roost Visitor (VBRV) you will often work and travel alone, without direct supervision or assistance. Even if occupiers or other members of the public are present at a roost you are still deemed to be lone working.

## What are the hazards?

Some of the more common lone working hazards include (non-exhaustive):

- Working with the general public especially if they are 'unknown'.
- Undertaking a regulatory duty which can lead to tension.
- Going into rural or isolated areas, sometimes with poor communication links.
- Going into restricted spaces and working at height.

## Managing the risks

The best way to control the hazards associated with lone working is to avoid lone working. Pairing up with another VBRV can significantly reduce the risks not only from lone working, but those associated with manual handling, violence and aggression and working in restricted spaces. It also means you will have someone to help with emergency arrangements should anything happen while on the visit.

## When undertaking a bat roost visit alone ensure you:

- Have the right skills and training.
- Have a safe system of work for an emergency situation.
- Are prepared in the event of an incident.

## Right skills and training

Training on how to spot and control rising aggression and violence is available to VBRVs on the Skillport online learning system via the [Training page](#) of the Natural England website.

Try to adopt a sensitive and empathetic approach to the building occupier, use your knowledge to engage and educate the individual(s) - it can be invaluable to help members of the public understand what you are trying to achieve. If you sense the individual is becoming aggressive then leave as quickly as possible.

## Safe system of work

### Prior to going on the visit

Check you have a good mobile phone signal in the area which you are visiting and ensure you have a charged battery.

Set up a buddy system to ensure the alarm is raised if you do not return from a visit when expected. Getting assistance quickly is very important so using a buddy is vital.

- We recommend VBRVs use the automated Lone Alert Protection system administered through our bat

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advice line contractors, the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT). Details about how the LoneAlert system works and instructions on how to use it are available on the VBRV Health and Safety page of the Natural England website. Please contact your BCT lot coordinator to enrol on the LoneAlert system.

- Alternatively, you may use a friend or family member as a buddy. Details of how this arrangement should be set up and the escalation process to be followed are available on the VBRV Health and Safety page of the Natural England website.

Whatever system you choose please ensure your buddy has all the information required should they need to raise the alarm and identify your last known whereabouts.

### Be prepared

Have a first aid kit available to treat minor injuries. Have an agreement with the building occupier to ensure any injury sustained whilst undertaking the visit is communicated quickly and the alarm raised.

### Reporting an incident

You must report any accident, near miss or incident which occurs whilst performing or travelling to / from a roost visit to Natural England as soon as possible:

- Contact the Natural England 'near miss and incident reporting line' at any time on 0300 060 0100.
- If the incident results in injury to another person or damage to property please also

contact: Martin Rhodes 0300 060 2676 or Lucy Foster 0300 060 0666.

### Feedback

If you have any feedback about this guidance or would like to see additions / amendments please get in touch by emailing:

[batvolunteers@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:batvolunteers@naturalengland.org.uk)

### Further information

Please see our website page and other VBRV health and safety leaflets at:

[Health and safety for voluntary bat roost visitors](#)

[Publications for voluntary bat roost visitors](#)

Natural England Technical Information Notes are available to download from the Natural England website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk).

For further information contact the Natural England Enquiry Service on 0300 060 0863 or e-mail [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk).

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ISBN 978-1-78354-041-9