

Pest Free Kaipātiki (PFK) Pest Plant Control Health & Safety Hazard Sheet

Pest Plant Control Activity

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Keeping you and the environment safe.

Whether working on your own property or during a community working bee, pest plant control outdoors has associated risks or hazards. Use your common sense and do not put yourself in risky situations, please talk to use about the project you have in mind in case we can help by giving specific advice.

Also note that in certain areas you may require permissions from other parties to control weeds. For example you must never go onto another resident's property to control weeds, (except to the door to knock and speak to the occupant) unless you have permission to do so by the occupant. To control weeds, you need the landowners approval.

Before doing any work in Reserves you must be registered as an official volunteer. You can either advise Auckland Council via our Parks Ranger directly so the council is informed and can support you as needed – or we can do this on your behalf. Similarly, the road corridor is classified as public land and you must obtain permission to do weed control within this area. Not only are there more risks to your safety, but some forms of weed control on the roadside can affect road stability – so it's vital your desires are communicated to council first before any work occurs. Again PFK can help broker this advice and permission.

Please read the below hazard list for situations you may encounter because of your weed control activity. We highly recommend you follow the associated actions to minimise the risk to your health and safety.



Bites and stings – spider, insect stings, allergic reactions

- Ensure that all participants are appropriately dressed, e.g. long sleeves and trousers, sturdy footwear, thick socks
- Carry personal antihistamines and use insect repellent if required
- Periodically inspect the work site to identify wasp nests
- Alert others if a wasp nest is found and minimise disturbance to the nest
- In a reserve, log a Report a Problem so the council can control it



Hand tools, such as saws and spades – potential for injury to self or others

- Sharp-edged instruments should be sheathed when not in use
- Store in a place out of the way where there is less risk of being stood on or tripped over
- Always cut away from the body and keep at least 2m distance between yourself and other workers



Lone worker – getting lost, harassment, attack

- Make sure you understand the extent of property boundaries so you don't accidentally wander onto another
- Encourage buddying up
- Make sure children are not working alone
- Always carry a fully charged cell phone to call for help
- Stay calm and do not engage in a debate
- If you feel unsafe, leave vicinity immediately and call 111 if you deem necessary. Call PFK staff to inform of any issue
- Avoid areas with signs of illegal human activity (i.e. tents, shelters, rubbish piles, etc) and report to the council if on public land
- If working alone, set a communication protocol and escalation process in the event a lone worker does not check in
- Exclude tasks too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by a lone worker

- Carry personal first aid kit
- Wear a high vis vest or fluro clothing. It helps others see you easily and may be critical for identification if an accident occurs



Working with agrichemicals – spills, absorption, inhalation

- Follow instructions in the helpful [Forest & Bird Weed Guide](#) and PFK's [policy on herbicide use](#) and pest plant control methods
- Read and retain the relevant Material Safety Data Sheet for herbicides – for every product these can be found online
- Wear appropriate PPE as advertised on the MSDS or back of bottle (note the use of certain PPE may accelerate the onset of heat stress - so take more frequent hydration breaks) - often including gloves, covered clothing and eye protection
- After works, ensure all PPE is rinsed/ washed
- Do not drink or consume food in areas where herbicides are used
- Avoid putting hands near mouth and eyes during use
- Herbicide gels can be used without qualifications, however to apply any herbicide spray via a hand-sprayer or backpack sprayer on public land - you must attend a Growsafe Course. These are free - contact PFK for more information. Only glyphosate spraying is allowed after the Growsafe course on public land unless otherwise specifically permitted after discussion with Council Park Rangers
- If spraying on reserves, warning signs provided by Auckland Council to be made visible at entrance ways and points of public access



Slips, trips and falls

- Remove trip hazards from the work site by filling holes, removing unnecessary objects, etc, or clearly mark out the trip hazard
- Exercise additional caution when walking downhill, e.g. walk across the slope
- Identify, and closely supervise, workers with pre-existing back, knee or ankle injuries
- Exclude works/tasks too dangerous to be carried out
- Ensure that suitable footwear is firmly laced
- Don't lay pest control tools in difficult areas – choose somewhere close to intended location that is more secure
- Avoid carrying heavy or awkward-sized objects on uneven ground
- Stop work if having difficulty walking without slipping or falling over



Manual handling – potential for strain

- Make sure that there is a clear pathway to their destination
- Use wheelbarrows to ease burdens if necessary
- Ask for assistance if in doubt (in particular spray knapsacks)
- Bend the knees and keep back straight when picking up from the ground



Injury from sharp vegetation

- Scan ahead to check for vegetation that may cause injury
- Wear long sleeve clothing, full length trousers and appropriate footwear
- Take care in wetlands or around rushes and reeds - bending down easily can cause eye injuries



Working in hot conditions – dehydration, heat exhaustion, sunburn

- Maintain hydration by providing adequate water and regular drink breaks
- Schedule or reschedule work to avoid heavy exertion during the most intense heat of the day
- Reinforce the need for long trousers and long sleeves, broad brimmed hats and sunglasses
- Provide and encourage the regular use of sunscreen on any exposed skin
- Stop work and inform a buddy if you are feeling unwell



Working in cold conditions – hypothermia, loss of dexterity

- Maintain hydration and energy levels by providing adequate water and regular snack breaks
- Schedule work to avoid the coldest times of the day
- Wear long trousers, long sleeves and layered clothing that provides insulation, bring a raincoat if the weather is set for rain



Working near water – drowning, illness from water borne disease or pollution exposure

- Avoid contact with water that smells or appears to be polluted, [report a pollution problem](#) if found
- Maintain ample distance from water that may be dangerous because of depth, current, murkiness, turbulence, difficulty of escape, etc
- Supervise children around water
- Refrain from working on steep, slippery, or unstable banks; do not place tools in these areas
- Ensure access to adequate washing facilities, e.g. soap and clean water



Working near roadsides – impact from vehicles

- Wear high visibility vests
- Maintain direct supervision
- Do not set foot on the road corridor itself - use pathways and verges instead
- Use high vis-cones to provide additional warning to motorists you are working nearby



Dog bite or other animal attacks

- Avoid approaching unleashed dogs
- Remain calm if approached by a dog; do not run away from a dog
- Attempt to isolate yourself from the animal; climb a tree, where possible
- Call police on 111 if attacked