

Working on a salt marsh can be dangerous, so it's always important recognise potential hazards, and take steps to mitigate against them. Here's a list of the main hazards, who might be affected by them, how to reduce the risk, and any extra steps that can be taken before you visit the salt marsh.

Type of hazard	Who's affected	How to reduce the risk	Extra steps to take	Priority H/M/L
Condition of vehicle	Driver & occupants	Vehicle serviced; driver checks.		H
Driving vehicle	All	Highway code followed.		H
Slipping on seaweed or mud	All	Suitable waterproof, well-fitting footwear worn.		M
Injury	All	Bring along a first aid box if you have one.		H
Medical condition	All	If you have a potentially serious health problem (e.g. an allergy to insect stings or asthma), make sure you carry supplies of medication and make sure you know how to use them in the event of any problem.		H
Sinking into mud	All	Be particularly careful when crossing creeks. No crossing of creeks in areas with suspected quicksand. Suitable waterproof, well-fitting footwear should be worn. Mobile phone with emergency contacts should be carried. Avoid lone working.		M

Trapping by tide	All	Tide tables should be consulted. On large spring tide days, move off the marsh 2 hours before high water. Flooding of marsh by spring tides is rare in summer months. Be aware of local conditions. Keep watch of the tide throughout spring tide visits, especially in poor visibility. Work on the low marsh / mudflat should be carried out on an outgoing tide.	Consult tide tables for information on tides.	H
Freak waves	All	This risk only applies to mudflats below marshes, and only in very extreme conditions. Fieldwork should be stopped if any such extreme conditions arise.		L
Allergy to saltmarsh plants	All	Look out for signs of irritated skin. If you feel unwell, leave the marsh and consult a doctor if the condition worsens.		L
Falling into creeks	All	Avoid areas next to deep creeks. Only cross deep creeks during low water and if absolutely necessary.		H
Exposure to cold/wet	All	Carry or wear suitable waterproof and windproof clothing.	Consult MetOffice for weather forecasts.	M
Exposure to heat (sunburn/dehydration)	All	Wear sun cream and sun hat, and carry plenty of water.	Consult MetOffice for weather forecasts.	M

Losing party member, leading to enhanced risk of above hazards	All	Assign a team leader who's job it is to keep everyone in sight.		M
Transport of equipment across the salt marsh	All	Use rucksacks to transport gear across the marsh. Ensure that the weight is evenly distributed and take a rest if tired.		L
Being shot or blown up if a marsh is used for MoD or game-shooting practices	All	Avoid marshes if these activities are taking place. Look for signs around the marsh that warn of shooting activities.		H
Trampling from livestock such as cattle, horses and sheep	All	Avoid marshes that have a large number of livestock. If livestock is present, take care to always keep them in sight. Do not walk behind an animal as it may kick.		M