WATER MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE

BIOSECURITY POLICY

OPERATIONS

Review date: September 2022

To be reviewed every 5 years

Next review date: September 2027

Reviewed by: WMA Consortium Management Committee

Adopted by:

WMA Member Boards:
Broads Internal Drainage Board
East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board
King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board
Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board
South Holland Internal Drainage Board
Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland Internal Drainage Board
Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board
Upper Ouse Water Management Board

WMA Associated Boards:
Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board
Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board
Over and Willingham Internal Drainage Board
Swavesey Internal Drainage Board
Waldersey Internal Drainage Board

Water Management Alliance

BIOSECURITY POLICY

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BIOSECURITY POLICY

1. PURPOSE

(a) This policy covers activities undertaken by the Internal Drainage Boards from site to site, to reduce the spread and damage from invasive non-native species. It is intended that the Board's staff and contractors will follow procedures commensurate with this policy.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

(a) Invasive non-native species are widespread nationally and if left uncontrolled present a threat to our aquatic and riparian systems. It is imperative that our field operations to manage flood risk and water levels do not exacerbate the risks to the environment and the UK economy, that are posed by these species. Failure to take measures to prevent the spread of invasive non-native species, where these are known to be present, can risk prosecution under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

(b) Vigilance is required if we are to stop the spread of invasive non-native species, and it is imperative that we integrate basic biosecurity in our operations to prevent this spread. Much to do withbiosecurity involves awareness, common sense and agreed procedures.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) The Boards are responsible for reviewing and approving the content and implementation of this Policy.

(b) The Boards will ensure any new contracts let will include reference to the Policy where a risk is considered to exist arising from works involved.

(c) All Board Members, staff and contractors are required to comply with the Policy's requirements and share responsibility for performance in implementing the Policy, regarding health, safety and welfare of the environment.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

(a) This Policy is implemented through supporting guidance documentation covering biosecurity procedures.

(b) Where biosecurity risks have been identified operational Staff will be provided with training and information on identification of INNS likely to be found within the relevant Drainage District.

(c) All operational machinery, tools and personal protection equipment (PPE) identified as at risk of cross-contamination will be subject to 'check, clean, dry' decontamination procedures before moving between operations on watercourses and sites.

(d) All Operational Staff will report sightings of INNS to (either the WMA's Environmental Officers, or the GB NNS Secretariat directly).

5. REVIEW

(a) This Policy will be reviewed, as a minimum, every five years.

BIOSECURITY PROCEDURES

6. PURPOSE

(a) These procedures aim to help Board members, staff, and operators working for the WMA Group to identify key biosecurity risks pertinent to the internal drainage district and the Board's activities and identify measures to address these risks.

7. OBJECTIVES

(a) Unless you know and have inspected a site it is best to assume that it may have invasive non-native species and diseases that can be spread by contaminated clothes and equipment, so biosecurity is an important issue that should be planned for. Operators should take care to avoid transporting water and material between water bodies where a risk has been identified, hence it is essential that the Boards takes appropriate actions.

(b) Operators visiting a site where an invasive non-native species is known to be present, should take measures to ensure they do not spread it. Failure to do so can risk prosecution under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

(c) While most operators will be vigilant about the risk of spreading invasive non-native species and diseases, there is a real risk that those that are not could accidentally spread these organisms, harming the environment and potentially damaging the reputation of the Board, compromising its ability to operate, or work with partners

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Awareness

(a) The Operations Manager and contractors will have oversight of biosecurity, disseminate information, and report on these matters.

(b) The Board's staff will be encouraged to seek information on invasive non-native species and biosecurity practices. The Environment Agency and Non-Native Species Secretariat have relevant useful information.

(c) If a risk is identified then the operator concerned or contractor should be made aware of the priority invasive non-native species, with specific attention to aquatic and riparian species of concern and those known to be present in the surrounding area. Training for staff and operatives as shall be provided as appropriate, and information will be disseminated through toolbox talks, workshops, leaflets, emails etc. Contractors should be asked to confirm that they have similar arrangements in place.

(d) Signage, species alerts/information sheets, or guidance should be in place, making operators aware of the risks, and providing advice on how to prevent spread.

Monitoring

(e) Operators should be vigilant in the field for invasive non-native species and have an appropriate mechanism for recording and reporting sightings of suspected species, location, and relevant details.

(f) New sightings should be reported to the Operations Manager and WMA Environmental Team, and other authorities and/or land managers as appropriate. The iRecord app (https://irecord.org.uk/app) available free for Apple and Android devices, shows you how to record invasive non-native plant species and enables you to easily submit geo-located photos. The Seek app (https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app) allows sightings to be checked where the operator is unsure of an invasive's identity.

Planning Works

(g) Biosecurity should be taken into consideration alongside other factors, such as health and safety, when planning operations and standard working procedures.

(h) The risk of spreading invasive non-native species can be reduced by reducing the contact time in which equipment is exposed to the water. This is particularly important for items such as trailers, which have cavities that may retain water and be hard to inspect.

(i) Propagules are small bits of plant that become detached and often give rise to a new plant. Working practices that either reduce, or contain and remove, propagules or seed, should be encouraged where practicable, especially in regards to mechanical vegetation control.

Cleaning

(j) Decontamination is an essential process to be carried out prior to leaving a site where invasive species are present. This ensures that any foreign matter remains on the land/watercourse of origin, rather than taking it to another location. Remember: Check, Clean, Dry - www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/

(k) Where it is not possible to conduct the decontamination prior to leaving the land/watercourse where the work was conducted (e.g. steam cleaning larger equipment), the operation should be carried out immediately afterwards at the depot or another secure site before the next operation.

(l) Where a cross contamination risk has been identified any field team moving from a contaminated site should carry a 'disinfection box'. This should contain an appropriate commercial disinfectant, a spray bottle, cloths or sponges, a scrubbing brush and protective gloves.

(m) On completion of a field operation, for situations where cross contamination is identified as a risk, the following principles apply:

- Visually inspect all tools, equipment and machinery that has come into contact with the water for evidence of attached plant or animal material, or adherent mud or debris.
- Remove any attached or adherent material before leaving the site of operation.
- Washing/hosing with water will be sufficient to remove debris from most tools, equipment and machinery. Use hot water where possible.
- Ensure that all water is drained from any water retaining compartments, outboard motors, tanks and other equipment before transportation elsewhere.
- A high-pressure washer preferably steam cleaner will be essential for more difficult stains or soil, paying particular attention to the tyres, tracks and undercarriage of vehicles and buckets, hulls, outboard motors and submerged parts of machinery. High-pressure steam cleaning, with water >40^{o}c, is recommended for larger equipment, excavators, boats, trailers, and outboard motors that are being moved from one watercourse to another.
- Clothing and PPE should be visually inspected and any attached vegetation or debris removed. Soiled clothing and PPE should be removed for laundering and boots scrubbed clean; hands and other body parts may also need cleaning.
- Finally, decontamination by spraying on a commercial disinfectant at the recommended strength to the cleaned boots, tools, equipment or machinery will ensure any remaining disease agents or pests are destroyed

(n) Every effort should be made to ensure that the decontamination process is a public exercise and where appropriate tactfully brought to the attention of the landowner or manager at the appropriate time. It is not just a question of doing the right thing but also being seen to be doing it.In this way, public confidence will be maintained in flood and water level management operations.