Volunteer Work Guide and Risk Assessment

General guidance issued by Loch Earn Sailing Club
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Contents

Introduction and scope ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Volunteer safety - quick guide 2
1.0 Competence and personal responsibility 3
2.0 General precautions for volunteer work 3
3.0 Risk ratings and responsibility 3
4.0 Grounds cleaning and waste clearance 4
4.1 Lopping and trimming 4
4.2 Chainsaws 4
4.3 Rubbish and vegetation removal 4
4.4 Cleaning and pressure washing 4
4.5 Hazardous substances and COSHH 5
5.0 Boat handling launching and trailers 5
5.1 Moving boats and heavy items 5
5.2 Vehicles and trailers 5
5.3 Launching and recovery 5
5.4 Water edge and work afloat 6
5.5 Hoists cranes and lifting accessories 6
5.6 Mast handling 6
5.7 Lifting equipment examinations 6
6.0 Repairs tools and work at height 7
6.1 Boat and trailer repairs 7
6.2 Hand and power tools 7
6.3 Ladders and work at height 7
6.4 Equipment suitability and PUWER 7
7.0 Emergency arrangements and completion of work 8
8.0 Teamwork and lone working 8
9.0 Guidance and Source Links 9

Introduction and scope

Thank you for helping to maintain LESC and keep the club ready for everyone to enjoy.
This guide provides a general risk assessment for volunteer work at LESC, during work parties and at other times. Read it before starting and apply the relevant precautions to your task, equipment, site and conditions.

It covers routine maintenance and practical club jobs. Unfamiliar or specialist work needs further assessment and the arrangements specified below.

LOCH EARN SAILING CLUB

Lend a hand safely

A quick guide for work parties and other club jobs

Read the full risk assessment before you start.

Take responsibility

Take ownership of the risks in your volunteer job. Consider what could harm you or others and take sensible precautions. Choose work within your skills and physical ability; ask if unsure.

Work safely

Use suitable equipment and protective clothing for the task. Do not use damaged or unsafe tools. Follow product instructions and never mix cleaning chemicals.

Work together

Agree how shared jobs will be done and how to stop. Keep others clear of the work area. Do not work alone on higher-risk jobs.

Plan higher-risk work

Chainsaws require trained, competent operators. Lifting and work at height need suitable planning and equipment. Avoid work at height; specialist tasks need separate arrangements.

Stay safe near water

Wear suitable buoyancy protection where a fall into water is foreseeable. Agree practical rescue arrangements. Keep clear of tensioned lines and suspended loads.

Be ready for an emergency

Know the first-aid and rescue arrangements. Have working communication. For serious injury or danger to life, call 999 or 112 and give the exact club location and access details.

STOP AND ASK

Reassess if the job or conditions change. You can decline or stop any task without pressure.

LEAVE IT SAFE

Secure boats and trailers, clear tools and waste, and report damage, incidents and near misses.

Outline guidance only. Read the LESC Volunteer Work Guide and Risk Assessment and apply the precautions to the actual task. This summary does not authorise specialist work.

1.0 Competence and personal responsibility

1.1 Choose work within your skills, knowledge, experience and physical ability. Experience may come from the club, employment or elsewhere. Take reasonable care for yourself and others, disclose limitations and follow the precautions. You remain responsible for your actions and omissions. Stop and seek help if unsure; you may decline or stop without pressure.

1.2 The organiser coordinates the jobs list and general arrangements. Volunteers select suitable routine tasks and check the relevant precautions themselves. LESC retains responsibility for reasonable overall arrangements and coordination.

2.0 General precautions for volunteer work

2.1 Follow the relevant controls and agree how shared tasks will be done and stopped. Discuss unfamiliar work or significant changes first. Keep children, visitors, dogs and other members clear. Under 18s may do only suitable low-risk tasks under direct adult supervision; no chainsaws or vehicle operation. Inexperienced helpers need suitable instruction and supervision.

2.2 Check equipment, routes and ground conditions; remove defective equipment from use. Wear sturdy non-slip footwear, work clothing and task-specific protective equipment (PPE). Take breaks and do not work while impaired by alcohol, drugs, illness or fatigue. Keep access and escape routes clear.

2.3 Monitor weather, water level, light and footing; stop in unsafe conditions. Work with others where practicable and follow Section 8.0 on lone working. Tree felling, climbing, roof work, cranes, major lifting and specialist repairs require separate competent planning.

2.4 Consider PUWER (equipment), LOLER (lifting), COSHH (hazardous substances) and the Work at Height Regulations. Legal duties depend on employment, premises/equipment control and the activity; volunteers are not automatically exempt. LESC should establish its duties, including premises and substance safety, and seek competent advice if uncertain. [9.10–9.16]

2.5 For higher-risk work, agree the scope, method, supervision and emergency arrangements with a person competent to plan it. Participants must work within their training, check equipment and follow substance safety information. Required inspection or examination records must be available. Defer work if suitable expertise, equipment or precautions are unavailable.

3.0 Risk ratings and responsibility

3.1 Rating	General guidance
H High	Do not start until the risk has been reduced.
M Medium	Proceed only with the relevant precautions in place; coordinate shared or higher-risk tasks.
L Low	Normal controls and monitoring.
All ratings	Indicative ratings show risk before and after precautions. Serious harm remains possible: assess the actual job and do not proceed if residual risk is high.

3.2 Protect everyone affected, including volunteers, members, children, visitors, contractors and the public. This guide does not waive legal rights or remove duties owed by LESC, its officers, organisers or participants.

4.0 Grounds cleaning and waste clearance

Activity and harm	Safety precautions	Risk before / after
4.1 Lopping and trimming Cuts, eye injuries, falling branches and strains.	Inspect the tree and surroundings, including hidden wire and cables. Use suitable secateurs, loppers, hand saws or hedge trimmers within your competence and the tool's limits. Work from stable ground without overreaching; keep hands clear of blades. Establish a drop zone, exclude others and remove small sections under control. Wear gloves and eye protection, with head/hearing protection as needed. Stop for large, unstable or suspended limbs, overhead services or work requiring climbing; arrange a competent specialist.	H → M
4.2 Chainsaws Severe cuts, kickback, falling timber, noise and vibration.	Only adults with relevant chainsaw training, competence certification and current ability for the exact task may operate. Agree the scope, exclusion zone and precautions with helpers. Use a checked rear-handled saw from stable ground with both hands; no ladders, climbing, overhead cutting or top-handled saws. Wear chainsaw leg protection and protective boots, helmet, eye/face and hearing protection, and suitable gloves. Keep helpers outside the exclusion zone until cutting stops. No lone working; provide suitable first-aid capability and bleeding-control supplies. Refuel with the engine stopped and cooled. No tree felling or tensioned/windblown timber under this assessment. [9.2, 9.3]	H → M
4.3 Rubbish and vegetation removal Sharps, punctures, contamination and lifting injuries.	Inspect waste first; use tools or litter pickers for concealed items. Wear suitable gloves and footwear; gloves do not protect reliably against sharps. Do not compress bags by hand or bag protruding sharps. Separate glass, metal, chemicals, batteries and fuel. Isolate needles, suspected asbestos and unidentified hazardous waste for specialist disposal. Use manageable loads and suitable trolleys; keep skips stable and do not climb in. Confirm items are unwanted before disposal. Wash hands before eating.	H → L
4.4 Cleaning and pressure washing Slips, chemical splashes, electric shock and high-pressure injury.	Use labelled products as directed; never mix chemicals. Provide ventilation and suitable gloves/eye protection. Isolate or sign wet areas. Check electrical equipment, keep connections dry and use suitable RCD protection for mains equipment. Keep hoses and leads out of routes. Pressure-washer users must be competent; never direct jets at people, electrics or unstable surfaces. Isolate before clearing blockages. Keep chemicals and contaminated wash-water out of the loch. Apply Sections 4.5 and 6.4.	H → M

Activity and harm	Safety precautions	Risk before / after
4.5 Hazardous substances and COSHH Skin/eye injury, harmful dust, vapour or mist and ill health.	Identify harmful products and task-generated dust, vapour or mist. Assess who could be exposed, how and for how long. Use labels and safety data sheets; these do not replace the assessment. Avoid harmful substances or use safer products/methods where practicable. Provide suitable ventilation/extraction, limit exposure and specify suitable gloves, eye protection and any necessary respiratory protection with instruction. Keep products labelled; never mix chemicals or use drinks containers. Agree storage, spill response, first aid and disposal. Wash hands before eating, protect others and keep pollutants out of drains and the loch. Stop if exposure cannot be assessed or controlled. Suspected asbestos needs separate specialist arrangements. [9.13]	H → M

5.0 Boat handling launching and trailers

Activity and harm	Safety precautions	Risk before / after
5.1 Moving boats and heavy items Crushing, strains, trapped fingers and runaway loads.	Plan the move: check weight, balance, supports, route and destination. Avoid hazardous lifting; use suitable trolleys or rated handling aids before a team lift. Use enough capable helpers and one leader with agreed commands. Clear the route, move slowly and avoid pinch points. Keep clear of uncontrolled downhill loads and gaps between boats and fixed objects. Never try to catch a falling boat. Secure against wind and movement at the destination. [9.4]	H → M
5.2 Vehicles and trailers Collision, overturning, detachment and crushing.	Use competent authorised drivers and a suitable vehicle/trailer combination within its ratings. Check tyres, wheels, bearings, frame, hitch, safety connection, brakes where fitted, winch and straps. Secure the load and confirm coupling engagement. Before uncoupling, apply brakes, use suitable chocks and position the jockey wheel/support correctly. Separate pedestrians; drive at walking speed on site. Use one visible banksman when reversing; stop if they disappear. No trailer passengers. Road towing needs a separate roadworthiness and legal check.	H → M
5.3 Launching and recovery Runaway boats, winch failure, crushing and slips.	Use an experienced launch/recovery leader and agree the sequence and stop signal. Check slipway traction, slope, depth, boat supports, rated winch, attachment points and lines. Exclude bystanders. Keep clear of the boat's downhill path, the vehicle/trailer gap and tensioned lines. Keep hands out of winches; do not step over loaded lines. Maintain secure restraint until controlled afloat or safely supported ashore. Use correct supports and lashings. Stop if traction, weather or control is inadequate.	H → M

Activity and harm	Safety precautions	Risk before / after
5.4 Water edge and work afloat Drowning, cold-water shock, entrapment and propeller injury.	Avoid unnecessary water entry. Wear suitable, correctly fitted buoyancy equipment afloat and wherever a fall into water is foreseeable; use lifejackets where self-rescue cannot be relied on. Before starting, have an effective rescue/recovery plan, trained helpers, rescue equipment and communication. Provide a suitable staffed rescue boat where needed for effective recovery. Use competent boat operators and kill cords where fitted. Stop engines near people in the water. Never enter between a floating boat and trailer or swim to retrieve equipment. [9.5]	H → M
5.5 Hoists cranes and lifting accessories Dropped loads, equipment failure, crushing and overturning.	Hoists, cranes and lifting winches require a task-specific lift plan by a competent person, suitable supervision and competent operators. Check load weight, centre of gravity, ground/support capacity, rated attachment points, equipment suitability and marked safe working loads; never exceed ratings. Check slings, shackles, hooks and sling configuration. Establish an exclusion zone and clear signals; keep everyone clear of suspended loads. Never lift people with load-only equipment. Check required examination records and resolve defects before use. Pulling-only winches must not suspend loads. Hand lifting is covered by Section 5.1. This general assessment alone does not authorise mechanised lifts. [9.11, 9.12]	H → M*

5.6 Mast handling: check overhead power lines and obstructions; use enough helpers and suitable equipment. Keep everyone clear beneath a raised mast. Plan separately where needed and stop if control is inadequate.

5.7 Where LOLER applies, arrange competent-person thorough examinations: normally every six months for lifting accessories and equipment lifting people, and twelve months for other lifting equipment, unless a competent-person examination scheme specifies otherwise. Check requirements after installation or exceptional events. Keep reports and address defects. Servicing and pre-use checks do not replace thorough examination. Confirm suitable examination arrangements for club equipment where statutory scope is unclear. [9.12]

5.8 *Section 5.5’s residual rating depends on a separate lift assessment and all agreed controls. Without these, risk remains high: do not lift.

6.0 Repairs tools and work at height

Activity and harm	Safety precautions	Risk before / after
6.1 Boat and trailer repairs Collapse, unexpected movement, cuts, burns and stored energy.	Repair only within your competence. Work on firm level ground, immobilise trailers and support boats/loads on suitable rated stands. Never rely on a jack, winch or hydraulic pressure alone or work beneath an unsupported load. Isolate power, batteries, fuel and moving parts as relevant; safely release stored energy. Use suitable parts and tools. Brakes, couplings, structural welding, gas, mains electrics and other safety-critical work need a suitably qualified or demonstrably competent specialist. Inspect/test before release; label unfinished or unsafe items out of use.	H → M
6.2 Hand and power tools Cuts, entanglement, flying particles, dust, fire and electric shock.	Use suitable maintained tools with guards fitted. Secure workpieces and isolate before blade changes or clearing jams. Remove loose clothing/jewellery; avoid loose gloves near rotating machinery. Use eye/hearing protection, suitable dust controls, ventilation/extraction and appropriate respiratory protection for harmful dust/vapours. Keep ignition sources away from fuels, solvents and battery charging. Hot work needs separate fire precautions. Check leads and electrical protection; stop for damaged equipment or unsafe wet conditions. Apply Section 6.4 to club, borrowed, hired and personal equipment.	H → M
6.3 Ladders and work at height Falls, falling objects and collapse of access equipment or surfaces.	Avoid height by working from the ground. Any fall liable to injure counts; there is no minimum height. Where unavoidable, prevent falls with safe platforms or suitable access equipment, preferring collective protection such as guardrails. Ladders are only for assessed low-risk, light, short tasks where more protective equipment is not justified; short duration alone is insufficient. Competent users must check ladders/steps, use firm level supports, prevent slipping and maintain safe contact. No overreaching, heavy loads or forceful two-handed work. Secure tools, exclude people below and stop for unsafe wind, ice, light or footing. No roof work, tree climbing, chainsaws from ladders or improvised access under this assessment. Higher-risk access needs separate competent planning and rescue arrangements. No lone work at height. [9.14, 9.15]	H → M
6.4 Equipment suitability and PUWER Injury from unsuitable, damaged or poorly controlled equipment.	Users must check equipment is suitable, appears safe and has effective guards/controls. Follow instructions and work within your competence; restrict higher-risk machinery to competent authorised adults. Include borrowed, hired and personal tools. Club equipment needs suitable maintenance, competent inspections where installation or deterioration affects safety, and records where required. Check electrical protection and safe isolation, including stored energy. Label unsafe items out of use and report defects. Required formal inspection/examination records must be current; pre-use checks do not replace them. Seek advice or use different equipment if safety is uncertain. [9.10]	H → M

7.0 Emergency arrangements and completion of work

7.1 Before work, ensure suitable first-aid supplies and rescue equipment are available and know how to summon help. Check phone/radio coverage; arrange an alternative if needed. Do not start without essential emergency arrangements.

7.2 For serious injury or danger to life, stop, make the area safe and call 999 or 112. Give the exact club location and access instructions; direct responders and keep access clear. For a person in the water, raise the alarm and use the planned rescue from a safe position. Do not enter without suitable training and equipment.

7.3 On completion, secure boats/trailers, isolate defects, remove waste/tools and clear routes. Report incidents and near misses. LESC should review this assessment after relevant changes or incidents.

7.4 For separately planned lifting/access work, agree how to recover an injured, trapped or suspended person before starting. Provide trained help, equipment and communication. Do not rely solely on emergency services for a work-at-height rescue. Defer work if planned rescue arrangements are unavailable. [9.14, 9.17]

8.0 Teamwork and lone working

8.1 Work with others where practicable. Shared or higher-risk work needs suitable help close enough to recognise a problem, summon assistance and help safely. Stay outside tool exclusion zones.

8.2 Work alone only on low-risk routine tasks within your competence. Tell a reliable person your location, task and finish time. Agree check-ins and action if contact is missed. Carry a working means of calling for help and confirm completion. Do not work alone without communication and timely assistance.

8.3 No lone working with chainsaws, heavy boats/loads, launching/recovery, afloat, at height, beneath boats/trailers or near water where a fall is foreseeable. Defer any task needing a helper or rescue, or risking entrapment or inability to call for help, until suitable assistance is available.

9.0 Guidance and Source Links

9.1 Sources inform these controls and indicative ratings; apply them to each job. Sources 9.2–9.9 were checked on 17 October 2026 and 9.10–9.17 on 19 October 2026. These references do not verify the club's equipment, records or arrangements.

9.2 HSE Working with chainsaws
https://www.hse.gov.uk/treework/safety-topics/chainsaw-operator.htm

9.3 HSE Chainsaws at work INDG317
https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg317.pdf

9.4 HSE Manual handling at work
https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/manual-handling/reduce-risk-injury.htm

9.5 HSE Prevention of drowning
https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/prevention-of-drowning.htm

9.6 RYA Guide to risk assessments
https://www.rya.org.uk/network/clubs-and-affiliates/managing-activities/safety-on-the-water/risk-assessment/

9.7 HSE Volunteering and duties of care
https://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/employer/health-and-safety-law.htm

9.8 HSE Managing risks to volunteers
https://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/employer/risk-assessment.htm

9.9 HSE Managing the risks of working alone
https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/employer/manage-the-risks-of-working-alone.htm

9.10 HSE Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/puwer-overview.htm

9.11 HSE Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/loler-overview.htm

9.12 HSE Thorough examinations and inspections of lifting equipment
https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/thorough-examinations-lifting-equipment.htm

9.13 HSE How to carry out a COSHH risk assessment
https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/assessment.htm

9.14 HSE Introduction to working at height safely
https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/introduction.htm

9.15 HSE How and when to use a ladder at work
https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/ladders/when-how-to-use-ladders-safely.htm

9.16 HSE Running a safe amateur sports club
https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/leisure/amateur-sports-club.htm

9.17 HSE Work at height questions and answers
https://www.hse.gov.uk/Construction/faq-height.htm