

# **Witham and Humber Drainage Boards**

## **Biosecurity Policy**

### **PURPOSE**

This document sets out the Biosecurity Policy of Upper Witham, Witham First District, Witham Third District and North East Lindsey Internal Drainage Boards. It covers activities undertaken by the IDB daily 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.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

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 economy that are posed by these species. Failure to minimise the spread of invasive non-native species, when visiting a site where an invasive non-native species is known to be present, can risk prosecution under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

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 with biosecurity involves awareness, common sense and agreed procedures.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Board is responsible for reviewing and approving the content and implementation of this Policy.

The Board will ensure any new contracts let will include reference to the Policy, where a risk is considered to exist arising from the works involved.

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

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

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

Where biosecurity risks have been identified, Operational Staff and contractors will be provided with training and information on identification of invasive non-native species likely to be found within the Drainage District.

All Operational Staff will report sightings of invasive non-native species to the Environment and GIS Technician, on (01522) 697123, their line manager or the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat directly on [nnss@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nnss@apha.gsi.gov.uk).

# Witham and Humber Drainage Boards

## Biosecurity Procedures

### PURPOSE

These procedures aim to help Board members, staff, operatives and contractors working for the IDB to identify key biosecurity risks pertinent to the internal drainage district and the Board's activities and identify measures to address these risks.

Accidentally spread invasive non-native species may be harmful to the environment and potentially damaging the reputation of the Board, compromising its ability to operate, or work with partners. Operatives and contractors 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.

### OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness around invasive non-native species via training.
- Identify, and keep a record of, known areas where invasive non-native species are an issue.
- Ensure operatives and contractors take care to avoid transporting water and material between water bodies where a risk has been identified.
- Ensure ongoing monitoring of invasive non-native species when undertaking operations.
- Remain vigilant when undertaking operations to identify any further areas where invasive non-native species exist.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Awareness

The Environment and GIS Technician will have oversight of biosecurity, disseminate information, and report on these matters.

The Board's staff and contractors 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.

If a risk is identified then the operative 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 shall be provided as appropriate. Information will be disseminated through toolbox talks, workshops, leaflets, emails etc. Contractors should be asked to confirm that they have similar arrangements in place and NELDB's contractor will be afforded the opportunity to participate in training events.

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

#### Monitoring

Operatives and contractors 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.

New sightings should be reported to the Environment and GIS Technician, on (01522) 697123, their line manager or the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat directly on [nss@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nss@apha.gsi.gov.uk). The PlantTracker app ([www.planttracker.org.uk/](http://www.planttracker.org.uk/)), available

free for Apple and Android devices, shows you how to identify invasive non-native plant species and enables you to easily submit geo-located photos whenever you find one.

### **Planning works**

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

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.

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

### **Cleaning**

Remember: **Check, Clean, Dry** - [www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/)

### **APPROVAL**

These procedures were adopted on:

- Upper Witham IDB - **17/09/2018**
- North East Lindsey IDB – **18/09/2018**
- Witham First District IDB – **25/09/2018**
- Witham Third District IDB – **25/09/2018**

This Policy will be reviewed no later than September 2023.