



BAG THE BRUCK

1-30 April 2026

SAFETY ADVICE



Risk Assessing the situation:

Before you embark on your Bag the Bruck (BtB) clean-up it is important to think ahead and be aware of potential dangers or hazards. In this way you can help to reduce the risk of accidents and injuries and know what to do in an emergency. One way of doing this is to carry out a risk assessment and Greener Orkney recommends using [the MCS Risk Assessment template](#) which you can download [here](#) or email bagthebruck@gmail.com for a copy. Alternatively, the Health & Safety Executive website at www.hse.gov.uk provides useful downloads targeted at employers but they can be adapted for voluntary groups.

You should go over the risk assessment with your volunteers before starting the clean-up and point out the hazards you have identified, for example slippery rocks, mudflats or rock-fall from cliffs and advise on precautions to avoid and/or protect against them.

Some of the issues to address when planning and undertaking your clean-up are listed below, with recommendations about how to keep yourself and other participants safe and well. If you decide that the area you have identified carries too many risks for you and your group, it may be better to choose an alternative location.

Avian influenza (bird flu) guidance:

Do not touch or pick up any dead or visibly sick birds that you find. Report a sick or injured bird to the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) on 03000 999 999. BtB is keen to help OIC with a microplastics survey project, so please see the 'Fulmar' sheet. If you do find dead fulmars they can be double bagged and taken to the Orkney Marine Services building at Scapa or reported to the [Marine Environmental Unit](#) at OIC.

General advice:

If you arrive in a vehicle, care should be taken to ensure that it is parked legally and won't cause annoyance or obstruction to other people. You should be dressed appropriately for the weather and terrain, e.g., wearing warm waterproof clothing if the weather is wet and windy, or sunscreen if conditions are bright. Protective gloves should be worn, as well as strong, comfortable boots or shoes.

Roadsides/Verges:

If working anywhere near traffic, limit litter picking to daylight hours, wear fluorescent arm bands, high visibility vests or tabards and choose sections of road where you can be seen clearly by approaching drivers. Avoid having people simultaneously collecting litter on both sides of the road.

Responsibility:

In group events volunteers should be reminded that they are taking part at their own risk and need to look out for their own safety.

Young volunteers:

If under-18s are taking part, they should be accompanied by an identified adult who will be responsible for them. The guidelines from the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) are a minimum adult/pupil ratios as follows: Under 7s, 1/6; 7-11 years, 1/10; 12-16 years, 1/15. Please ensure that parents' permission is obtained for all children taking part. If working near water, then supervisors and children should be able to swim. Before the clean-up, please ensure all children are aware of and understand the items they should pick up, as well as the items they should avoid.

Safety guidelines:

Go through the safety guidelines thoroughly and check that everyone has come prepared with appropriate clothing, including gloves. Remind everyone to wash their hands, arms and fingernails thoroughly after picking up litter. The use of disposable wipes is recommended but remember to bag them too.

First aid:

It is a good idea to take along a first aid kit and that at least one person in the group has first aid training. You should notify your volunteers of who the first aider is and what to do in case of illness or injury.

Make sure everyone knows who to go to in an emergency:

Please tell your volunteers where to get first aid treatment and where the emergency telephone is. Note that in certain areas there may be no mobile phone reception and you should therefore identify the nearest land line or public phone before the start of the event. You can also include 'What to do if...' advice at this point.

Location of toilet and refreshment facilities:

Make people aware of the location of the nearest toilet and refreshment facilities.

Tide time and weather:

You should carry out your beach clean on a falling tide - ideally starting an hour after high tide. Ensure everyone is aware of the low tide time so they are not caught out when it begins to rise again. Also, let them know the weather forecast for the day, so they know what to expect.

Finish time, meeting or collection point:

Make sure everyone knows what time they should stop, and where to meet up and leave the bags of collected litter and other items. Count the volunteers at both the start and end of the activity and ensure everyone is accounted for before the organiser leaves the event.

Insurance:

Obtaining Public Liability Insurance is advisable if you are planning and leading a BtB event with a number of volunteers. It will provide cover for your legal liability arising from accidental damage or injury (to a member of the public or their property) that may occur during the event. Many groups already have relevant cover e.g. educational institutions or groups that are part of a larger or national body.

Greener Orkney does not accept any liability for the safety of participants and does not accept any liability for accidents, loss, theft etc. as a result of participating in the event.