

Precautionary method of working for reptiles, common toads, hedgehogs, badgers and nesting birds

Biodiversity Specification #1



This is a summary document to outline the precautionary working practices for protected species (reptiles, common toads, badgers, hedgehogs and nesting birds), on sites where there is a low risk of the species being present and when the local planning authority (LPA) considers the precautionary measures to be applicable. This is not a legal document and does not include all information on wildlife protection and legislation.

The purpose of this document is to set out a method of working for sites where:

- Suitable features (such as rough grassland, hedgerows, trees, scrub and previously developed sites) for reptiles, common toads, badgers, hedgehogs and nesting birds are present, but are very limited in extent, and are likely to be affected by development, or;
- The risk of reptiles, common toads, hedgehogs, badger and nesting birds being present and affected by development proposals is unlikely but cannot be ruled out.
- Reptiles, common toads, hedgehogs, badgers and nesting birds can be found in a range of habitats. Where the LPA considers it appropriate, developers must adhere to the following specific requirements, depending on the suitability for particular species/ species groups.

Precautionary measures:

1. The site owner/site manager will ensure that anyone (including sub-contractors) undertaking construction, demolition and landscaping (both creation and management), is made aware of the potential for the site to support protected species, where to expect them, their protected status and the procedure to follow in the unlikely event that protected species are discovered during works. Where applicable, this advice will be given through site inductions, tool box talks (such as CIRIA toolbox talks) or similar. A copy of this Precautionary Method of Working will be kept on site and available for inspection at all times.
2. Should any protected species (i.e. common toads, reptiles, birds, hedgehogs and badger) be discovered during construction or other works on site, which are likely to be affected by the development, works will cease immediately. The owner/ site manager will then seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and works will only proceed in accordance with the advice they provide. The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) provides further guidance and advice on finding a suitably qualified ecologist.



In implementing the planning permission and related works, the following methods of working will be adopted:

3. Any vegetation clearance (i.e. removal of trees, scrub, hedgerows) or works to buildings shall not commence until a careful check for nesting birds has been completed, particularly during the main breeding season (months of March to August). If bird nests are found then works in the area must stop until the chicks have fledged the nest.
4. All clearance works (i.e. clearance of log piles, debris, rough grass etc.) will be undertaken when common reptiles and amphibians are likely to be fully active i.e. during the April to September period.
5. Clearance of dry stone walls, logs, brash, stones, rocks or piles of similar debris will be undertaken carefully and by hand.
6. Clearance of tall vegetation will be undertaken using a strimmer or brush cutter with all cuttings raked and removed the same day. Cutting will only be undertaken in a phased way which may either include:

Cutting vegetation to a height of no less than 30mm, clearing no more than one third of the site in any one day or;

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Cutting vegetation over three consecutive days to a height of no less than 150mm at the first cut, 75mm at the second cut and 30mm at the third cut;

7. Following removal of tall vegetation, using the methods outlined in point 5, remaining vegetation will be maintained at a height of 30mm through regular mowing or strimming to discourage common reptiles and amphibians from returning.

8. Ground clearance of any remaining low vegetation (if required) and any ground works will only be undertaken following the works in point 5) above.

9. Any trenches left overnight will be covered or provided with ramps to prevent animals falling into the trenches and being trapped. Excavations left overnight should be checked prior to filling. Any open pipes left overnight will be covered.

10. Any building materials such as bricks, stone etc. will be stored on pallets to discourage reptiles from using them as shelter. Any demolition materials will be stored in skips or similar containers rather than in piles on ground.



Further information about protected species and development including their ecological requirements, protection and the planning development system can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>

For further information on the relevant protected species and legislation, please refer to the website links below:

<https://www.arc-trust.org/legislative-protection-for-the-uks-herpetofauna>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/wildlife-and-the-law/wildlife-and-countryside-act/>

<https://www.mammal.org.uk/species-hub/full-species-hub/discover-mammals/species-hedgehog/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/badgers-protection-surveys-and-licences>

