

 West Berkshire Countryside Society	WBCS – Risk Assessment Working with blackthorn and other thorny material Recommendations and safe practice notes. First draft of this doc. 14 Feb. 2022	Prepared by CG
		Reviewed by BS MS TM NM AH
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HAZARDS

Principal hazard

Injury to skin, on hands, face and eyes following the handling of blackthorn during clearance operations.

Injury may occur to unprotected areas of the whole body particularly if only covered by light clothing.

Nature of the injury

Skin pierced by the significant spikes of blackthorn.

Outcome

Thorn(s) break off leaving small pieces under the skin which are likely to give rise to infection.

Medical attention

Be prepared to seek medical attention if the wound becomes inflamed and infected.

CONTROLS

Inspect and record

Carry out an inspection for, and record the presence of, blackthorn on the work site.

This check to be done before work starts as part of the site SPRA

Any additional findings of blackthorn should be notified to the work group during the work session.

Briefing

Identify the issues of working with blackthorns and other thorny material in start of day briefing

Identify the locations of blackthorn on site.

Identify the probable need for medical attention if a blackthorn injury is sustained.

PPE

Ideally use work gloves that are rated resistant to Needlestick piercing

This is not the same as Cut resistant

If “needlestick” rated gloves are not available leather welding gauntlets provide useful protection.

Arm protection may be needed as well

Use eye protection and hard hat (protects from flailing briars)

NOTES

Accident/Incident form

Remember to fill in an accident/incident form if medical attention has been sought.

There should be a blank copy of this form in the first aid box

Record “near misses” for future reference.