Sanitisation Policy

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External Operational	Standalone from 2026	Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Co-Directors/ Poutokomanawa

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Introduction

The risk of microbial infection in aquatic environments is a well-documented hazard. While the vast expanse and constant movement of open ocean waters typically dilute pathogens below infectious levels, public awareness of water safety is increasing as global marine health faces new challenges. Even in seemingly pristine conditions, seawater contains a high density of naturally occurring microbes.

The risk of direct infection remains low in open ocean settings; however, it increases significantly in the following high-risk conditions: Warm, brackish, or stagnant waters, areas proximate to sewage outfalls or agricultural run-off & locations with high animal access or dense human populations.

Microbes typically enter the human body through ingestion, inhalation, or contact with mucous membranes (eyes, nose, and mouth) and non-intact skin (cuts or abrasions).

Beyond environmental hazards, there is a significant risk of interpersonal transmission. Snorkel equipment, by its nature, comes into direct and prolonged contact with the mouth, nose, and eyes—primary gateways for infection. If gear is shared between participants without rigorous sanitization, it acts as a vector for bacteria and viruses (such as those causing respiratory infections or skin conditions) to pass from one person to another.

Furthermore, if equipment is not properly cleaned, dried, and stored after use, microbial colonies can flourish within the gear itself, reaching concentrations sufficient to cause infection even without a secondary host.

Snorkel equipment sanitisation

Mandatory procedures for the cleaning and maintenance of all snorkeling equipment. To ensure participant safety and environmental protection, the following protocols must be implemented during every field session. These steps are designed to eliminate the risk of cross-contamination, prevent the spread of waterborne illnesses, and ensure the longevity of our community assets.

Disinfection of gear

- ☐ Masks, snorkels & wetsuits must be sanitised after every single use.
- ☐ It is recommended that participants suitably cover any exposed wounds with suitable dressing or refrain from snorkel diving.

- ☐ Snorkel briefing will include a reminder for participants not to use our wetsuits as a toilet. If you suspect any bodily fluids (urine, faeces, blood or excessive skin sloughing) leave the suit to soak for 15 or more minutes (in a separate bin) and then rinse several times in freshwater and leave to dry.
- ☐ Ensure that participants are not spitting in masks - providing alternative defog.

Post delivery equipment care

- ☐ Wetsuits should dry on a line in a secure site, once dry; they must be stored in a lockable area, they should be placed on hangers during long breaks in use.
- ☐ Fins should be rinsed in freshwater before storing for long periods and should not be left in the sun when not in use.
- ☐ Whenever possible allow the mask and snorkel to dry completely in the sun (one hour max, do not leave in sun for prolonged period). Especially important for mask and snorkels to be completely dry for winter storage

Protocol

Assign a dedicated sanitisation monitor and brief this person on their role to ensure adequate sanitization of equipment. This could be a teacher, parent, volunteer or crew member.

Monitor briefing to include:

- ☐ Explanation of the equipment set up - where the clean and used buckets are and where equipment needs to go.
- ☐ Ensure that used masks aren't placed in the clean bucket
- ☐ That masks/ snorkel sets are to be soaked for 5-15mins* depending on the product used and amount of time - fully submerged.
- ☐ That they are rinsed and placed back into the mask box
- ☐ That wetsuits are being turned in the right way - dipped into diluted disinfectant solution, rinsed and then hung to dry
- ☐ If you suspect any bodily fluids (urine, faeces, blood or excessive skin sloughing) leave the suit to soak for 15 or more minutes (in a separate bin) and then rinse several times in freshwater and leave to dry.

* Follow instructions of the manufacturer for the sanitisation used - see below for product recommendations.

Disinfectant products

Both DX50, Saniwise and Milton are recommended products. Please read below to figure out which is best suited for your situation. You need to have a measuring jug included in your sanitisation kit. Chlorine based products such as Milton could also be used - but ensure you note your protocol on your event plan and/or pre-site.

DX50

Dosage	1:40 ratio - for every 10L of water 400ml of product
Soak time	5mins fully submerged
Process for masks and snorkels	- Measure out dosage for bucket - Put lid on bucket - or redose bucket after each rotation as product evaporates - Product does not need to be rinsed from mask/snorkels - Dispose as needed - photodegrades
Process for wetsuits	2 buckets - dilute solution of DX50 → freshwater rinse → hang. Unless there is bodily fluid contamination - see above for protocol.
Notes	Is best used when you are working with a fragile ecosystem. Product evaporates in the sun and dosage needs to be measured carefully. Chlorine free - it has no free chlorine in it (same as table salt NaCl), Inactivates a wider range of pathogens, Does not harm the soil, Potable water purifier, Evaporates leaving no residue, Kills 2.46x better than Chlorine and faster. DX50 has a strong odour in its concentrate form and care should be taken not to inhale when decanting. It is recommended to use it in a well-ventilated area. If you inhale enough to feel unwell, find and breathe fresh air. If you don't feel better after a short while, seek medical advice.

Saniwise

Dosage	1:100 ratio - for every 10L of water 100ml of product
Soak time	15mins fully submerged
Process for masks and snorkels	- Measure out dosage for bucket - Thoroughly rinse equipment before use - Dispose well away from waterway or storm water drains.
Process for wetsuits	2 buckets - dilute solution of Saniwise → freshwater rinse → hang. Unless there is bodily fluid contamination - see above for protocol.
Notes	SANIWISE is a hospital grade disinfectant. Please note that there is a risk to aquatic life with Saniwise. Ensure that all equipment is well rinsed. **If undiluted disinfectant accidently gets in the eye, flush with fresh water (follow instructions of safety information for product)**

Milton - tablets

Dosage	6:100 ratio - for every 10L of water 6 tablets of Milton
Soak time	15mins fully submerged
Process for masks and snorkels	- 6 tablets for 10L cold water - Rinse in freshwater for eye safety - Dispose away from waterway or storm water drains.
Process for wetsuits	2 buckets - dilute milton dose (1 tab) → freshwater rinse → hang. Unless there is bodily fluid contamination - see above for protocol.
Notes	Milton products are generally designed to be safe for sterilizing baby equipment, but they contain active ingredients that require specific safety precautions. The primary active ingredients sodium dichloroisocyanurate (in tablets)

	• Do Not Mix: Never mix Milton products with other chemicals, particularly acids or detergents, as this can release toxic chlorine gas. • Irritation Hazard: Both the fluid and tablets can cause serious eye irritation and skin irritation. • Handling: Avoid contact with eyes and skin. Wash hands thoroughly after handling the products. • Keep Out of Reach of Children: Always store in a safe place, out of the reach of children. • Corrosive to Metals: The solutions can be corrosive to metal objects, such as silver, stainless steel, or aluminum, if left to soak for long periods. First Aid Measures • Eye Contact: Immediately flush eyes with plenty of water for several minutes, removing contact lenses if present, and continue rinsing. • Skin Contact: Rinse skin with water. In case of irritation, seek medical advice. • Ingestion: If swallowed, drink plenty of water or milk. Do not induce vomiting. Seek medical attention immediately. Specific Product Information • Milton Sterilising Fluid/Tablets: Used for cold-water sterilization. The solution is effective for 24 hours.

Freshwater

Leptospirosis Prevention and Safety Protocol

This policy outlines the mandatory safety procedures to prevent the transmission of Leptospirosis. This protocol applies to all personnel operating in high-risk environments, including farms, stream banks, and areas with known rodent or cattle populations.

Leptospirosis is a serious bacterial disease transmitted through direct or indirect contact with the urine of infected animals (primarily rodents and cattle).

Potential Consequences of Exposure

- Severe flu-like illness
- Chronic kidney or liver damage
- Potential fatality if left untreated

Preventive Measures and Hygiene Standards

To mitigate the risk of infection, all personnel must adhere to the following "zero-contact" hygiene standards while on-site:

Hand Hygiene: Hands must be thoroughly washed with soap and water or treated with an alcohol-based sanitizer immediately after animal contact or environmental exposure.

Contamination Barriers: This protocol must be completed before eating, drinking, vaping, smoking, or handling personal items.

Facial Contact: Personnel are strictly prohibited from touching their face, eyes, or mouth while working in high-risk zones to prevent mucosal transmission.

Environmental Awareness: Exercise heightened caution when working near stagnant water, mud, or stream banks where animal urine may be concentrated.

Compliance

Adherence to these hygiene practices is mandatory. Failure to follow these protocols not only risks personal health but the safety of the wider team.

Note: If you develop sudden fever, chills, or muscle aches after working in high-risk areas, seek medical attention immediately and notify your supervisor.

General health advice

- [ ] Crew to wash and dry or sanitise hands regularly and before eating
- [ ] Stay home if you're sick
    - [ ] Cough into elbow
    - [ ] Avoid touching your face