

## LAUNCESTON ANGLING ASSOCIATION

### SAFETY ADVICE FOR LAA MEMBERS AND VISITORS.

Members and visiting anglers are asked to read carefully the following safety information and advice.

The aim of this advice is to raise anglers' awareness of the possible hazards that may be encountered when fishing. Whilst the sport of angling inevitably carries with it some element of risk to those taking part, by making sure that you adhere to common sense, simple precautions as outlined below, you can minimise the risk and reduce the potential for injury / ill health to yourself and others who may be affected by your actions.

If you have children who go out on the Association's waters, we would ask that you ensure they are properly supervised and/or understand the content and importance of this information and advice. Please note that the Association's rules require all junior members under the age of 12 years to be accompanied by an adult.

All members and visiting anglers should remain vigilant and take common sense precautions when out fishing and should bear in mind that access to the water, bank stability and the riverbed itself is subject to constant change, for example following flooding and periods of inclement weather.

Activity	Possible Hazard & Potential Effect	Information, advice and precautions to reduce risk
<b>Walking to the riverbank</b>	Overgrown, high and eroded riverbanks, which could result in slips, trips and falls.	Take care and use obvious paths where available. Be constantly aware that the riverbank can change significantly following flooding and frost leading to undercuts and unstable banks. Do not take it for granted the riverbank will be the same as on your last visit. Fences may also have been washed away, watch out for loose barbed wire fencing, tree branches and boulders that may have been deposited on the bank. Be aware that some banks are high and may have a sheer drop. These may not necessarily be at the water's edge. On some stretches the riverbank has been fenced off to prevent access and erosion by cattle, take your time, concentrate and watch footing when accessing overgrown areas. Much of the Association's water is remote from habitation. Always tell someone where you are going and an estimated time of return, carry a mobile phone (although it may not work in all areas)
<b>Walking to the riverbank / fishing</b>	Danger from farm animals, other wildlife and insects with potential to cause impact injury or bites.	Some access fields may contain bulls and cows with calves. Approach with caution and plan your route to avoid them if possible. Please note that dogs are not allowed to accompany anglers.
		Be aware that other wildlife and farm animals, including farm dogs can cause injury, adders though rarely encountered may be present and can cause a poisonous bite, avoid potential situations that may lead to conflict with wildlife.
		Keep well clear of wasp, hornet nests and beehives, wear insect repellent to deter biting insects and wear suitable protective clothing, especially if susceptible to allergic reaction.
<b>Walking to the riverbank</b>	Use of stiles & footbridges Potential for slips and falls	The Committee endeavour to ensure stiles and footbridges are maintained in a safe condition. Stiles can, however, become damaged and unstable following floods. Please take care when using stiles, if you find a damaged stile or footbridge do not attempt to use it and please report it to the LAA Secretary.

<b>Wading</b>	The riverbed	Following flooding the riverbed can change significantly, do not take it for granted it will be the same as your last visit.
		Large boulders, ledges and shelves may be encountered when wading, always use a wading staff. Take particular care when wading in deep or fast water and water that is coloured where you cannot see the bottom.
		Don't wade downstream on an unfamiliar stretch as you may get out of your depth and be unable to wade back against the current.
		The wearing of a buoyancy aid is strongly advised when in or near the water.
<b>General fishing</b>	Extreme weather conditions and potential for:	Sunburn
		Wear sunblock, even in cloudy conditions and wear a hat, wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from glare.
		Lightening Strike
		Beaware that if it is thundering and lightening, your rod (if carbon fibre /graphite/ metal based) is an ideal lightening conductor and you are ideally earthed when in water. Do not fish or walk with a fishing rod during electrical storms.
		High winds resulting in falling branches
		Avoid fishing directly under trees in very windy weather to reduce possible risk from falling branches.
		Icy conditions
		It is not uncommon for large slabs of ice to travel in the river flow during extremely cold weather, these can be dangerous if encountered during wading and it is not advisable to wade during such conditions. Take care when walking and accessing the river as the ground can be extremely slippery.
<b>General fishing</b>	Falling into the water	Be very careful when walking close to the river and when in the river, there may be steep drop-offs, stones can be slippery, riverbanks can be eroded, unstable or undercut. A buoyancy aid is strongly advised.
<b>Casting</b>	Contact with hook resulting in injury to self or others	Be vigilant and take care when back casting to avoid coming into contact with other anglers / the public on the riverbank. Some riverbanks may also be public footpaths.
		It is recommended that protective glasses are worn when fishing to protect your eyes from hooks, the wearing of a hat is also recommended. Weighted flies can be particularly unpredictable when casting.
		The use of barbless or de-barbed hooks is strongly encouraged and recommended.

<b>Fishing / casting</b>	Contact with hooks / line cuts which can result in puncture wounds and cuts	Hooks and line cuts can cause deep cuts and puncture wounds and allow infectious diseases into the body. Take care when tying, removing hooks and when casting, do not use rusty hooks, barbless / de-barbed hooks are strongly recommended. In the event of injury from hooks or line cuts, disinfect the area as soon as possible and cover with a clean waterproof plaster.
		It is recommended that a basic first aid kit is carried on fishing trips or kept in your car.
<b>Fishing / casting</b>	Contact with overhead power lines which can result in electrocution or electric shock	Overhead power lines are present on some LAA waters. The electricity supplier generally raises awareness of these via signs on the riverbank but these can become difficult to read due to sun damage, overgrown vegetation and vandalism and can be washed away in floods. Danger of death notices are normally displayed on electric poles.
		Rods made of metal, carbon fibre / graphite or similar materials will conduct electricity, other materials such as nylon line will allow electricity to flow along it when wet. Tackle does not need to come into contact as electric can arc.
		Anglers should maintain an adequate safety distance from overhead lines. Advice from the electricity supplier is that there should be no fishing within 30m (100 ft) of overhead power lines.
<b>Fishing / casting</b>	Accidental hooking of a bat whilst fishing at dusk when bats are active.	A small proportion of Daubenton's bats in the UK carry a rabies like virus which can cause illness in those bitten. This can be fatal if not treated at an early stage. If a bat is inadvertently hooked the angler is advised to attempt to land the bat on the riverbank where it may be able to free itself. The bat should not be handled directly without appropriate protection to avoid being bitten. If bitten or scratched wash the wound with clean water (not river water) as soon as possible and seek medical advice.
<b>General fishing</b>	Weil's disease (Leptospirosis) and other infectious disease	Weil's disease is a bacterial infection transmitted in rats urine. Wash your hands after fishing and before consuming food, disinfect any cuts / wounds received whilst on the riverbank as soon as possible and cover with a waterproof plaster. There may also be a risk on some water from treated / partially treated sewage effluent.
<b>General walking / fishing</b>	Lyme's Disease from Ticks	Ticks will be present in fields and on the riverbank, these may attach themselves to exposed areas of skin and can cause serious illness. Check for ticks and if found remove the tick and disinfect the affected area.
		Report any unexplained fever or rash at the bite site to your doctor as soon as possible.
<b>General walking / fishing</b>	Dermatitis / poisoning from contact with poisonous plants & fungi	Do not touch or eat unidentified berries, fungi or unidentified plants. Do not touch any part of Giant Hogweed as the sap can cause severe skin blistering and burns. It can also cause serious damage to the eyes.
		During long periods of hot, dry weather it is possible for algal scums to develop on water, avoid any contact, particularly if blue-green algae and wash off immediately if contact occurs.
<b>Driving on Tracks</b>	Accidents and injury to the public	Where LAA has a right of vehicular access, please be aware that these tracks may also be public rights of way. Drive slowly and be vigilant for pedestrians and animals

