



National
Operational
Guidance

Hazard

Physical damage to the environment



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

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Hazard - Physical damage to the environment

Hazard Knowledge

Some areas of natural conservation are susceptible to the risk of physical environmental damage. Careful movement and deployment of resources, i.e. fire service vehicles and equipment will help to reduce the possibility of physical damage. However knowledge and identification of the most susceptible sites is the most important factor in reducing environmental damage in these areas.



Control measure - Defined paths and tracks

Control measure knowledge

Nature conservation sites often have defined paths and tracks that are usually located away from the protected areas most susceptible to physical environmental damage. If present, and once it has been established that they are suitable for fire service use including access for vehicles, these paths and tracks should be used.

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- ensure that the location of defined paths and tracks are included within any operational risk plans or maps

Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Consider the least damaging routes to incidents
- Consider the least damaging routes to incidents and where possible, stay on marked paths and tracks



- Ensure that tracks and pathways are suitable for fire service vehicles
- Take care when deciding where to place equipment or tool dumps or siting control points
- Carry out an [environmental risk assessment](#)
- Establish 'exclusion zones' to protect sensitive assets that may be affected by firefighting



Control measure - Liaison with conservation bodies

Control measure knowledge

Areas of nature conservation (ANC) such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) in Northern Ireland) are important sites designated and protected for being the best examples of their characteristic wildlife and geology. Staff and volunteers from relevant nature conservation bodies normally manage these sites.

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Be aware of their legal responsibilities under nature conservation legislation, which includes the [Environmental Damage \(Prevention and Remediation\) Regulations \(EDR\) 2009 for Wales and Scotland or equivalent in Northern Ireland](#)
- Seek advice from relevant nature conservation bodies relating to areas susceptible to physical damage

Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Seek advice from landowners and other bodies on susceptible areas of the environment



- Implement an appropriate protection plan when an identified nature conservation site is at risk



Control measure - Operational risk information plan (Nature conservation sites)

Control measure knowledge

Although each nature conservation site will have its own environmental damage risks which can be captured with individual operational risk plans, a set of generic action plans will also help to identify generic environmental protection action to be taken in the early stages of an incident. See Section 2.6.5, [Environmental Protection Handbook](#).

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Consider introducing operational risk information plans with environmental risk notes for sites of nature conservation that are more susceptible to environmental damage. Where appropriate these plans should include:
 - Environmentally safe areas for deployments and movements of fire service resources
 - Identification of areas that are susceptible to physical environmental damage

Tactical actions

All personnel should:

- Ensure that all relevant incident information is relayed to the incident commander