



IFI Biosecurity Protocol for Field Survey Work

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Invasive species are an ever present threat in our aquatic and riparian systems and it is imperative that none of our field operations exacerbate the risks to the environment and to the economy that are posed by these species. Fish parasites, pathogens and diseases also represent a significant threat to the health status of our watercourses. The introduction or transfer of such pathogens or diseases has the potential to wipe out large populations of fish in affected waters or catchments. Vigilance is required if we are to stop the spread of invasive species and fish diseases, and it is imperative that we in IFI lead by example in the ongoing struggle against these significant threats to our fishery watercourses.

The need for basic biosecurity in our fisheries operations must become ingrained in the psyche of our staff if we are to do our part to stop the spread of hazardous invasive species and fish pathogens. Much to do with biosecurity involves awareness, common sense and agreed procedures. Listed below are some basic procedures that must be implemented when conducting field survey work.

Each field vehicle must carry a 'disinfection box'. This should contain Virkon Aquatic or another proprietary disinfectant, a spray bottle, cloths or sponges, a scrubbing brush and protective gloves.

On completion of any field operation, all equipment used must be treated according to the procedures listed below. Equipment in this respect includes the following: boats, trailers, outboard motors, anchors and rope, weights, tanks, buckets and bins, all PPE (including boots, wellingtons, waders, wetsuits, dry suits, waterproof clothing, life jackets, diving apparatus, etc.) and any technical or sampling apparatus used as part of the survey. Protective gloves must be worn when using any disinfectant solution in any of the procedures listed below.

- Visually inspect all equipment that has come into contact with the water for evidence of attached plant or animal material, or adherent mud or debris. This should be done before leaving the site.
- Remove any attached or adherent material (fish, fish scales, vegetation and debris) before leaving the site of operation.
- Ensure that all water is drained from boats, live wells and other water retaining compartments, outboard motors, tanks and other equipment before transportation elsewhere.
- High-pressure steam cleaning, with water > 40 degrees C, is recommended for boats (including oars, row locks, attachment ropes, anchors and buoys), trailers and outboard motors that are being moved from one watercourse to another. Many roadside garages provide these facilities. If it is not possible to steam clean the equipment, a normal power hose must be used. After cleaning visually inspect the equipment to ensure that all adherent material and debris has been removed.

- It is recommended to apply disinfectant, using the spray bottle from the ‘disinfection box’, to the undercarriage and wheels of the vehicle and trailer after steam cleaning or power hosing.
- Wet or live wells and other water retaining compartments in survey boats must be cleaned, rinsed or flushed with a 1% solution of Virkon Aquatic or another proprietary disinfection product. Alternatively, a 5% solution (100 ml / 20 litre solution) of chlorine bleach should be used. Rinse thoroughly with clean water.
- Tanks that are used to stock or transfer live fish should be thoroughly washed with a 1% solution of Virkon Aquatic or another proprietary disinfection product. Alternatively, a 5% solution (100 ml / 20 litre solution) of chlorine bleach should be used. All disinfected equipment must be thoroughly rinsed with clean water.
- Outboard motors should be flushed with a 1% solution of Virkon Aquatic or another proprietary disinfection product, or with water > 40 degrees C. Alternatively, a 5% solution (100 ml / 20 litre solution) of chlorine bleach should be used. Facilities will be provided at IFI stores countrywide to accommodate this operation.
- Nets (to include monofilament and braided gill nets, fyke nets and seine nets) must be cleaned of all vegetation and debris before returning to base. The clean nets must then be placed in a freezer for a period of four days (3 days will suffice for monofilament nets). Following this treatment the nets must be soaked in a 1% solution of Virkon Aquatic or a proprietary disinfectant for a period of not less than 15 minutes and thoroughly rinsed thereafter. Where these proprietary disinfectants are not available the nets must be soaked in a 5% solution (100 ml / 20 litre solution) of chlorine bleach for 1 hour and thoroughly rinsed after.
An SOP on ‘Management and Disinfection of Survey Nets’ is available on request from IFI Swords.
- Footwear should be dipped in or scrubbed with a disinfectant solution (e.g. 1% solution of Virkon Aquatic or another proprietary disinfection product) and thoroughly dried afterwards.
- All PPE should be visually inspected and any attached vegetation or debris removed. Where appropriate, the gear should be wiped down with a cloth soaked in 1% solution of Virkon Aquatic or another proprietary disinfection product. Alternatively, a 5% solution (100 ml / 20 litre solution) of chlorine bleach should be used. Rubber gloves must be worn when undertaking this procedure.
- Sampling equipment (e.g. electrofishing electrodes and cable, grab samplers, meter sticks, buckets and bins, etc.) must be cleaned, rinsed or wiped down with or dipped in a suitable disinfectant solution.
- Landing nets and hand nets must be dipped in disinfectant solution and rinsed in clean water.

- All field equipment must be suitably disinfected before being returned to the IFI Swords warehouse for storage. Staff will be requested to sign a prepared form detailing the nature of the disinfection process carried out and the date on which this was conducted.

Note

Disinfectants must be used with care and in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. They must be disposed of safely and never in close proximity to open waters,

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