



# **Basic Biosecurity Guidance**

**March 2026**



## Help stop the spread of invasive plants and animals

Great Britain (GB) is home to large areas of countryside which support a wide range of wildlife, and are important for our health, wellbeing, and the economy. Taking part in outdoor competitions is a great way to explore our natural environment but comes with a responsibility to protect them.

[Invasive non-native species](#) and other biosecurity threats, such as diseases, reduce our ability to access and enjoy waterways for sport and recreation, and harm the environment and our native wildlife. They can easily be spread on footwear, clothing, boats and equipment. The risk is higher at competitions where participants have travelled from other parts of the country, or abroad, and could be unknowingly carrying new invasive non-native species on their kit.

Everyone can help to reduce the risk by following a good biosecurity routine, remember to [Check Clean Dry](#) after leaving the water. Competition organisers can play a key part in protecting the environment and competition waters by ensuring participants follow a good biosecurity routine to reduce the risk of introducing and spreading invasive plants and animals.

### Basic biosecurity for competitions

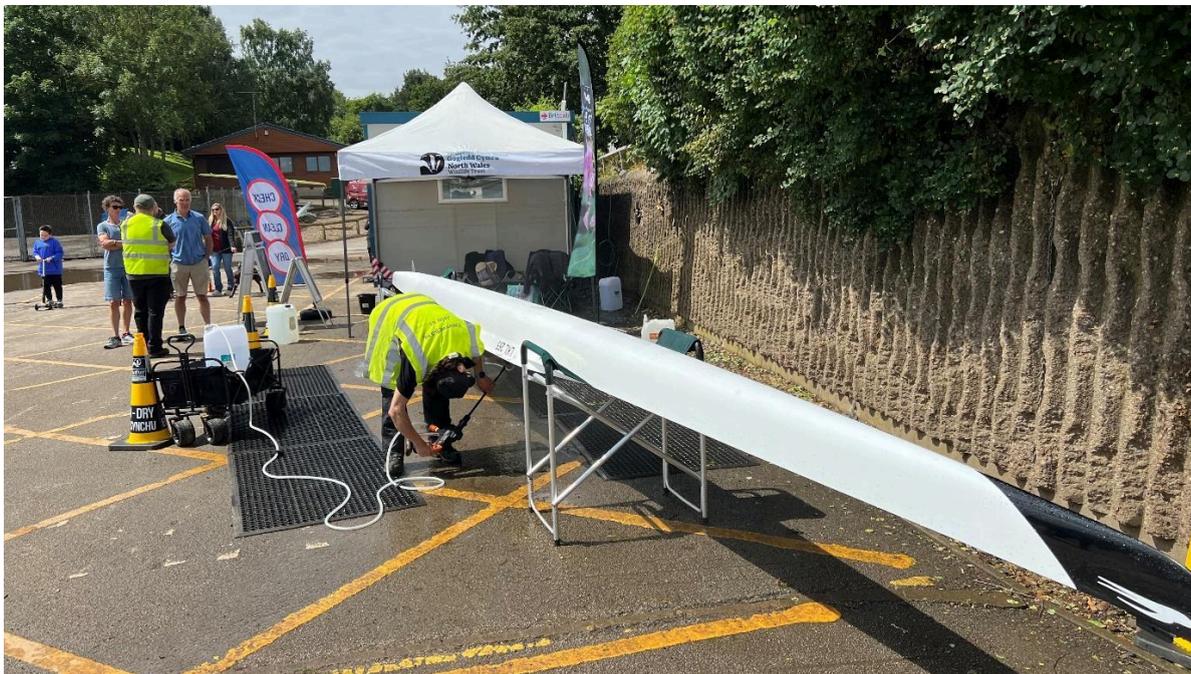
Below are some suggested actions that can help protect the water bodies you manage or use.

#### Before the competition

- Ask participants to arrive at the competition with all their kit clean and dry – draft pre-competition guidance is provided in Annex A
- Create a plan for improving biosecurity on the day (see below for things to consider)

### On the day:

- Set up a cleaning station for anyone who arrives with damp or dirty kit – [learn more about setting up a cleaning station at aquatic sporting competitions on pages 11-16 of this toolkit for paddling competitions.](#)
  - Participants should log in and out, confirming that they have arrived with clean kit, or have cleaned this on site
  - Make sure that any wash water run-off does not drain into the waterbody
- Limit access points to the water, and display [Check Clean Dry signs](#) by exit points to remind participants to clean their kit after the competition
- Provide equipment that can be borrowed and used instead of personal equipment
- Put waterproof [Check Clean Dry stickers](#) on any club-owned equipment to remind users to follow the guidance



*A washdown station. Image: North Wales Wildlife Trust*



### **After participants have taken part**

If you can set up a cleaning station on site, ask participants to visit this before they leave.

If you can't, remind participants that they should clean and dry their equipment back at base, before they use it again in another waterbody. Make sure that any wash water run-off or water emptied from boats after use does not drain into another waterbody.

Check Clean Dry guidance for participants is provided below:



Check boats, oars, equipment and clothing after leaving the water for mud, aquatic animals, or plant material. Remove anything you find and leave it at the site



Clean everything thoroughly as soon as you can, paying attention to trailers and areas that are damp and hard to access, such as inside joints. If you can't clean your boat and oars at the competition site, do this before you reassemble it back at your base. Use hot water if possible



Drain water from every part of your boat, oars and trailer before leaving the site. Dry everything for as long as possible before using it again elsewhere as some invasive plants and animals can survive for two weeks in damp conditions. You could use towels to help



## Resources

Further information can be found in the following resources:

- [Paddling competition Biosecurity Pack](#) - developed by Paddle UK and North Wales Wildlife Trust.
- [competition Biosecurity Support Pack \(PDF\)](#) - developed by the Cumbria Freshwater Invasive Non-Native Species Initiative
- [Scottish competition Biosecurity Support Guide \(PDF\)](#) and [Biosecurity Risk Assessment \(PDF\)](#)
- Free [online biosecurity training](#)

Free [Check Clean Dry materials](#) are also available to help you raise awareness at competitions, including biosecurity signs to display by entry and exit points to the water. Please email [sustainability@britishrowing.org](mailto:sustainability@britishrowing.org) if you would like any materials.

**Thank you for helping to protect the environment.**



## **Annex A: Pre-competition biosecurity guidance for competitors**

**PLEASE NOTE:** there will be biosecurity measures in place at this competition.

Invasive non-native species (plants and animals) harm the environment and wildlife and can block up waterways making it hard to access them for rowing. They can be small and hard to spot so are easily spread on damp equipment and clothing. Some can even live for two weeks in damp conditions.

Once established they become extremely difficult and expensive to eradicate, which is why it is so important to prevent their spread in the first place.

Please do your part to protect the environment and your sport.

### **Before you arrive**

Please Check, Clean, and Dry all equipment and clothing you will be using **BEFORE** you come to the competition, especially if you have used it abroad.

### **On arrival**

If you do arrive with damp or dirty kit, please allow plenty of time to visit the cleaning station before you go near the water. You may be refused access if you do not comply.

### **Before you leave**

Where a wash down station is available, please clean all equipment and clothing used during the competition before leaving the site. Alternatively, please clean your kit at home. Make sure everything is thoroughly dried before you use it again in another waterbody, and that any wash water run-off or water emptied from boats after use does not drain into another waterbody.

Remember to Check Clean Dry before moving from any waterway to another.

**Thank you for protecting the environment.**



## CHECK

Check boats, equipment and clothing after leaving the water for mud, aquatic animals, or plant material. Remove anything you find and leave it at the site.

## CLEAN

Clean everything thoroughly as soon as you can, paying attention to trailers and areas that are damp and hard to access. Use hot water if possible.

## DRY

Drain water from every part of your boat and trailer before leaving the site. Dry everything for as long as possible before using elsewhere as some invasive plants and animals can survive for two weeks in damp conditions.