

**GLEANING NETWORK UK**

**Event Risk Assessments and  
Health and Safety Recommendations**

**Prepared by:**

Veronica Pasteur  
On behalf of Feedback

**Updated by:**

Phil Holtam  
On behalf of Feedback

Feedback Global Ltd  
61, Mare Street  
London  
E8 4RG

**Tel: 020 3051 8633**

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## 1 Introduction

The Gleaning Network UK is an initiative run by Feedback, involving taking groups of adult volunteers to farms to harvest unwanted fruit and vegetables. The aim is to prevent avoidable food waste and to engage volunteers and the public in the issues around food waste. The Risk Assessments aim to provide specific health and safety advice relating to gleaning events.

The events take place on a regular basis across the Kent and Sussex. Volunteers usually travel to the farm by public transport though some volunteers are involved in driving vehicles to collect and deliver the fruit and veg.

This document covers the Risk Assessment for the events in general and details the recommended safety rules and procedures that should be adhered to.

## 2 Background

The Gleaning Network UK is an initiative run by Feedback, a UK-based global campaign against food waste. Since 2012 on an informal basis, Tristram Stuart, the founder of Feedback and colleagues have been taking groups of volunteers out to farms to harvest fruit and vegetables that would otherwise go unharvested.

Farmers across the country often have no choice but to leave tonnes of their crops unharvested to get ploughed back into the soil. These crops cannot reach the market either because they fail to meet strict cosmetic standards imposed by retailers or because of overproduction. At the same time, 5.8 million people suffer from deep poverty in the UK and cannot afford a decent diet. In the current economic climate this number is rising dramatically.

Gleaning Network UK coordinates teams of volunteers, local farmers and food redistribution charities in order to salvage this fresh, nutritious food and direct it to those that need it most. Several tonnes of excellent British produce – enough for thousands of meals – have already been saved in Kent, Sussex, Lincolnshire, and new gleaning groups are being formed in Manchester and Bristol. Apples, kale, cauliflowers, red, white and savoy cabbages have been among the crops saved by the Gleaning Network so far.

A Gleaning Day involves up to 30 volunteers under the stewardship of a volunteer coordinator spending a day on a farm and harvesting produce. Volunteers usually travel in a group on public transport, though those with cars may drive, with expenses for travel from a reasonable distance covered by Feedback. On arrival at the farm, the farmer or responsible staff member at the farm, will brief volunteers on what crop they will be harvesting, what area they will be harvesting it from, how best to harvest and gather it and what facilities are available to them e.g. toilets. In some cases, specific tools will be used to harvest particular crops e.g. harvesting knives for picking cauliflowers – in which case the farmer or volunteer coordinator will brief volunteers on how to use them. All possible equipment is outlined in the detail of the risk assessment.

Volunteers must wear appropriate clothing and footwear and be provided with any protective gear as required e.g. gloves. Volunteers spend several hours picking the fruit or vegetables, with regular breaks and a long break for lunch. Volunteers are encouraged to work at their own speed and take breaks as required.

In general, produce is packed into plastic crates for packing into a van or lorry and transporting to its final destination. Volunteers are briefed on the best methods for lifting and discouraged from lifting anything unless they are comfortable with it, and written copies of these briefings will be available through the volunteering coordinator. All volunteers will be briefed on safe manual handling, the use of knives, and the safe use of equipment, if these are relevant to the gleaning day. New and expectant mothers will require a suitable risk assessment be carried out which covers the risk from moving and handling.

### 3 Risk Assessment Introduction

The Risk Assessments presented in this document are based on the experience gained from previously held gleaning events where volunteers have been involved in harvesting fruit and veg on farms. In undertaking the risk assessments, the following approach has been adopted:

- Gather information/ identify risks
- Consider control measures appropriate to the identified risks
- Evaluate residual risk

The risk assessments presented in this document have been split into sections for easy reference. The risk assessments are not necessarily final, but do give an indication of the appropriate measures that should be incorporated into the event safety plan for each gleaning event. The hazards identified were evaluated using the risk assessment matrix below.

#### RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX FOR PERSONAL INJURY

		Severity					
		Multiple Death 10	Single Death 8	Major Injury 6	'7 day' Injury 4	Minor Injury 2	None 1
Likelihood	Certain 10	100	80	60	40	20	10
	Very Likely 8	80	64	48	32	16	8
	Probable 6	60	48	36	24	12	6
	Possible 4	40	32	24	16	8	4
	Unlikely 2	20	16	12	8	4	2
	Very Unlikely 1	10	8	6	4	2	1

Notes: The numerical scale used is to allow comparisons of the risk levels only. No literal meaning is implied by the scoring level. 'Major Injury' shall be as defined in RIDDOR

#### Key to Shading

100	Level of risk is unacceptable.
24	Level of risk may be tolerable. Seek to reduce level of risk.
12	Level of risk is acceptable

#### Definition of likelihood classes

<b>Certain</b> 10	Has happened before and is expected to happen on this occasion
<b>Very Likely</b> 8	Has happened before and is very likely to happen on this occasion
<b>Probable</b> 6	Has been known to occur before and is likely to happen on this occasion
<b>Possible</b> 4	Has been known to occur before and it may happen on this occasion
<b>Unlikely</b> 2	Has been known to occur before but no reason to suggest that it will happen on this occasion
<b>Very Unlikely</b> 1	Has never happened before and there are no reasons to suggest it will happen on this occasion

#### Abbreviations Used in Assessments

V = Volunteers

S = Staff

P = Public

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**4. SECTION 1 – GENERAL RISKS**

Subject Area / Hazards and Effect	To Whom	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Primary risk based on no controls			Existing Control Measures	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Residual Risk			Action Required Where Risks are Not Adequately Controlled	Other Comments
		S	L	R		S	L	R		
<b>1. Weather conditions</b> Rain Wind Snow Hot sun	S, V S, V S, V S, V	2	6	12	a) Obtain weather reports in days beforehand and advise volunteers via email to wear suitable footwear and clothing e.g. head covering, waterproofs, wellington boots.  b) Provide high-factor sunscreen and plenty of drinking water  c) In case of predicted heavy snow, event will be cancelled.  d) First Aid kit to be taken on all Gleaning Days.	2	6	12	One staff member to be First Aid trained.  Kit to take gleaning includes first aid kit and sunscreen	It is possible that weather will be so extreme as to justify the cancellation of gleaning events e.g. in heavy snow  There is a risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.
		2	6	12		2	6	12		
		4	4	16		4	2	8		
		4	4	16		2	4	8		
<b>2. Pre-existing medical condition</b>	S, V	8	4	32	a) Advise participants that they are responsible for their own medical conditions and they should to carry sufficient medication for their condition to cover 12 hours.  b) Advise participants who have a pre-existing medical condition to fill in their name, address, next of kin and medical details on a volunteer form which will be kept by the volunteer coordinator.	6	2	12	A database of volunteers should be kept with contact details, emergency contact details and any medical issues. These details should be held by the volunteer coordinator on the day.	Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice. Coordinator to make it clear that volunteers will be asked to leave/stop if they ignore safety advice
<b>3. Lack of physical fitness</b>	S, V	4	4	16	a) Volunteers advised that the days involve physical activity and that a minimal level of fitness is required.  b) Volunteer coordinator to look out for volunteers in difficulty and advise them not to continue.	2	4	8		Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.

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Subject Area / Hazards and Effect	To Whom	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Primary risk based on no controls			Existing Control Measures	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Residual Risk			Action Required Where Risks are Not Adequately Controlled	Other Comments
		S	L	R		S	L	R		
					c) Coordinator to ensure they have full postcode of the field location available to hand in case of calling emergency services.					
<b>4. First Aid</b> Illness or injury.	S, V	8	2	16	a) Take First Aid kit on gleaning day. b) Check details of nearest hospital to farm. c) Coordinator to ensure they have full postcode of the field location available to hand in case of calling emergency services. d) Check there is phone reception in the field, and if not, check the location of the nearest accessible phone. e) Where possible, ensure there is a vehicle onsite to drive the injured or ill party to the nearest hospital.	4	2	8	One qualified First Aider to participate in each Gleaning day.	
<b>5. Trips, slips, falls, insect bites</b> Sprains, broken limbs, concussion, cuts, bruising, grazes, cramps, bites, blisters etc.	S, V	6	4	24	a) Brief volunteers at beginning of the day to take care on the farm, being aware of uneven ground. Volunteer coordinator should identify any specific hazards at the beginning of the day and alert volunteers to them. c) Volunteer coordinator to carry basic first aid kit. d) Volunteer coordinator to administer first aid, as per their Emergency First Aid at Work training. d) Coordinator to ensure they have full postcode of the field location available to hand in case of calling emergency services. e) Any treatment or medical action to be recorded in an accident book by the volunteer	4	2	8	One qualified first aider to participate in each Gleaning day.	Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.  Risks to individuals cannot be totally removed, control measures reduce risks to lowest practical levels.

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Subject Area / Hazards and Effect	To Whom	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Primary risk based on no controls			Existing Control Measures	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Residual Risk			Action Required Where Risks are Not Adequately Controlled	Other Comments
		S	L	R		S	L	R		
					coordinator, to assess any repeated injuries or accidents which require extra mitigation.					
6. Site specific risks – on the farm	S, V	?	?	?	a) Each new farm site will present new health and safety risks and hazards. Prior to each gleaning day on a new site, the gleaning coordinator will request the farmer's risk assessment for their workers in order to ascertain these risks, and create a modified risk assessment with extra precautions taken for unskilled volunteers.	?	?	?	Request risk assessment for new farm sites from the farmer	

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**4. SECTION 2 – EQUIPMENT AND ACTIVITY RISKS**

Subject Area / Hazards and Effect	To Whom	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Primary risk based on no controls			Existing Control Measures	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Residual Risk			Action Required Where Risks are Not Adequately Controlled	Other Comments
		S	L	R		S	L	R		
<b>1. Using harvesting knives</b>	V, S	8	6	48	a) Brief volunteers on how to use knives before work commences b) Provide container for keeping knives when they are not in use c) Provide protective gloves to be worn when knives are used d) Oversee volunteers to ensure they are using knives safely. b) Printed copy of safe knife use guidelines available to volunteers through volunteer coordinator.	6	4	24	Volunteer coordinator to be trained in delivery of H&S training.	Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.
<b>2. Using ladders</b>	V, S	8	6	48	a) Brief volunteers on safe use of ladders before work commences if ladders used. Ensure ladders are suitable for the task and that volunteers are competent to use them. Ensure a working at height risk assessment is carried out where working at height takes place b) Printed copy of safe ladder use guidelines available to volunteers through volunteer coordinator. b) Ensure volunteers using ladders wear suitable footwear c) Ensure that volunteers using ladders do so only in pairs with one person ensuring the other's safety at all times.	6	4	24	Volunteer coordinator to be trained in delivery of H&S training.	Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.
<b>3. Using front loaded fruit baskets</b>	V, S	6	4	24	a) Brief volunteers on correct use of front-loaded fruit baskets before work commences if they will be used, as part of manual handling training.	8	2	16		

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Subject Area / Hazards and Effect	To Whom	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Primary risk based on no controls			Existing Control Measures	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Residual Risk			Action Required Where Risks are Not Adequately Controlled	Other Comments
		S	L	R		S	L	R		
					b) Printed copy of manual handling guidelines available to volunteers through volunteer coordinator.  b) Volunteers with back problems should be discouraged from using baskets as part of manual handling training.					
<b>5. Manual Handling</b> Injury to staff and volunteers lifting crates of fruit or vegetables	V, S	6	4	24	a) Volunteer coordinator to brief volunteers on safe lifting and manual handling  b) Printed copy of manual handling guidelines available to volunteers through volunteer coordinator.  c) Volunteers with back problems will be discouraged from any heavy lifting as part of manual handling training.	4	2	8	All volunteers to be properly trained in manual handling.	Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.



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**4. SECTION 3 – RISKS OF BEING ON A FARM**

Subject Area / Hazards and Effect	To Whom	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Primary risk based on no controls			Existing Control Measures	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Residual Risk			Action Required Where Risks are Not Adequately Controlled	Other Comments
		S	x L	= R		S	x L	= R		
<b>1. Farm vehicles</b> Vehicles moving around the area of Gleaning activity	S, V	8	4	32	a) Farmer to advise staff that volunteers are on farm  b) Volunteer coordinator to advise volunteers to be aware of vehicles .  c) Volunteers working near vehicles to wear high visibility bibs, provided by volunteer coordinator.	6	2	12	Briefing to be developed for volunteers on the risks of being on a farm and how to mitigate them	Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.
<b>2. Uneven, slippery surfaces in farmyards or in fields</b>	S, V	6	4	24	a) Volunteers to be advised to wear suitable footwear and clothing  b) Volunteer coordinator to liaise with farmer and brief volunteers on areas that are out of bounds	4	2	8		Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.
<b>3. Farm dogs</b> Bites Loose dogs causing accidents	S, V	4	4	16	a) Farmers to keep dogs under control at all times  b) Farmer to tie up dogs not comfortable around strangers	4	2	8		Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.
<b>4. Chemicals on site</b> Farms may have chemicals like fertilizers on the field, and other chemicals on site in storage	S, V	6	4	24	a) Volunteer coordinator to check with farmer in advance if there any storage facilities on farm site with chemicals dangerous to volunteers. Volunteers told not to go within dangerous range of such storage facilities.  b) Volunteer coordinator to check with farmer in advance if there are any dangerous fertilizers used on the fields gleaners will be gleaning from or nearby, which volunteers should avoid or wear protective clothing to work in.	4	2	8		Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.

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Subject Area / Hazards and Effect	To Whom	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Primary risk based on no controls			Existing Control Measures	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Residual Risk			Action Required Where Risks are Not Adequately Controlled	Other Comments
		S	L	R		S	L	R		
<b>5. Electric shocks</b> From pylons, electricity wires, electric fences, etc.	S, V	8	4	32	a) Volunteer coordinator to advise volunteers to be aware of potential electrically charged structures, avoid them, and point out potentially dangerous structures.	6	2	12	Briefing to be developed for volunteers on the risks of being around a farm and how to mitigate them	Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.
<b>6. Ponds, rivers and waterways</b> Volunteers may slip into water	S, V	8	4	32	a) Volunteer coordinator to advise volunteers not to be aware of nearby bodies of water, to avoid them if possible, and be careful around them if they do go near to them.	6	2	12		Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.
<b>7. Livestock</b> Volunteers may need to walk through fields with livestock, and risk being hurt by animals	S, V	6	4	24	a) Volunteer coordinator to advise volunteers to be cautious around livestock, and to avoid fields with livestock if possible.	4	2	8		Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.

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4. SECTION 4 – RISKS TO VOLUNTEER WELLBEING

Subject Area / Hazards and Effect	To Whom	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Primary risk based on no controls			Existing Control Measures	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Residual Risk			Action Required Where Risks are Not Adequately Controlled	Other Comments
		S	L	R		S	L	R		
<b>1. Toilets</b>	S, V	4	4	16	a) Volunteer coordinator to liaise with farmer to ensure volunteers have access to toilets whilst on farm site.  b) If there are no toilets on the farm site, volunteer coordinator to ask farmer where nearest public toilets are, and ensure there is transport available for volunteers to get to them.	2	2	4	Briefing to be developed for volunteers on the risks of being on a farm and how to mitigate them	Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.
<b>2. Drinking water</b> Volunteers may become dehydrated whilst working on site, especially if working in hot weather	S, V	6	6	36	a) Volunteer coordinator to bring plenty of water on site, and make volunteers aware where they can access this.	4	2	8		
<b>3. Lone worker policy</b> Volunteers working alone may be more vulnerable to other risks mentioned above, and assistance may take longer to arrive	S, V	6	4	24	a) Volunteers to be advised to work in pairs if spread out over a large area and not in sight of each other, in order that someone is able to raise the alarm if an issue arises.	4	2	8		Risk to individuals who ignore safety advice.



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**4. SECTION 5 – RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, gleaners who fall within the category of increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus, ie aged over 70 or have an existing health condition, will be unable to attend our events.

Subject Area / Hazards and Effect	To Whom	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Primary risk based on no controls			Existing Control Measures	Severity Rating x Likelihood = Residual Risk			Action Required Where Risks are Not Adequately Controlled	Other Comments
		S	x	L = R		S	x	L = R		
<p><b>1. Spread of virus</b></p> <p>Asymptomatic gleaning volunteers may have contact with another that spreads the virus</p> <p>Volunteers may contaminate objects on the farm through handling them</p> <p>Volunteers with asymptomatic conditions might spread virus to public through handling of produce</p>	S, V, P	6	4	40	<p>a) Hand washing is a mandatory step for all volunteers at the start of the day and <a href="#">before &amp;</a> after lunch.</p> <p>b) Single use gloves are used at all times when handling fresh produce. These are provided by the gleaning coordinator.</p> <p>c) Gleaning coordinator ensures that hand sanitizer is available from them for regular use. Volunteers are made aware that use of hand sanitizer is essential.</p> <p>d) Volunteers will be asked not to touch anything on the farm with bare hands. Tools or crates will not be given to volunteers until they are wearing gloves.</p> <p>e) Volunteers are asked in the sign-up form to confirm that themselves or members of their household have not presented with virus symptoms for 14 days.</p> <p>f) Gleaning coordinator to ensure participants maintain social distancing etiquette of at least 2m apart. This is to be explained in advance in writing and at the start of the gleaning day.</p> <p>g) Lift sharing with members of differing households is no-longer an acceptable mode of transport for travelling to and from the farm.</p>	4	4	16	<p>If a volunteer arrives presenting with symptoms then they will be asked to go home immediately.</p> <p>If etiquette rules are not observed the gleaning coordinator is to remind gleaners repeatedly.</p>	Risk of individuals ignoring safety advice.

**“There is currently no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission of the virus.”**  
 European Food Standards Agency, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## **5. Conclusions**

Absolute safety for volunteers involved in gleaning cannot be guaranteed. This Risk Assessment aims to outline the key areas of risk and actions which should be taken to minimise them. It is anticipated that this document will be revisited on an ongoing basis.

To facilitate this each event should be formally reviewed to identify any shortcomings and identify areas for improvement.