

Safety Tips



While the EarthEcho Water Challenge is intended to be both educational and fun, it is essential that those who participate in this event do so with safety in mind! It is important to follow a few simple precautions as you enter the water this year.

- **Always monitor with one or more partners.** Let someone else know where you are, when you intend to return, and what to do if you don't come back at the appointed time.
- **Make sure at least one person present at the monitoring site can swim.** This rule of thumb applies to areas where the water is deep enough to threaten drowning.
- **Listen to the weather report.** Do not go sampling in heavy rain or if a storm is predicted.
- **Keep your pets at home.** Animals can damage streambanks and hurt or destroy aquatic life or wildlife.
- **Never cross private property without the permission of the landowner.** It is better to sample only at public access points, such as bridge or road crossings, or on public lands.
- **Watch for dogs, farm animals, snakes, and insects such as ticks and bees.** Wear boots, a hat, light colored long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Tuck in your pant legs and spray pants and sleeves with insect repellent.
- **Dispose of reacted test samples by flushing down the drain with excess water.** While in the field, reacted samples can be poured together into a waste container for later disposal.
- **Know your vegetation.** Learn to identify poisonous or other problem plants.
- **Never drink the water at the monitoring site.** Assume it is unsafe and bring your own drinking water.
- **Heed the signs.** Do not monitor if the water appears to be badly polluted or is posted against swimming.
- **Watch where you step.** Do not walk on unstable stream banks that might be in danger of eroding or collapse.
- **Think carefully before leaving the bank.** Never wade in swift or high water.
- **Stay out of the waterbody as much as possible.** Bottoms are slippery, can contain deep pools or sink holes, and can also have sensitive habitats that should not be destroyed.
- **If you monitor from a boat, follow safe boating practices.** Be sure to wear a life jacket at all times.
- **Wear latex or rubber gloves, when you are monitoring.** Wash your hands with antibacterial soap when you're finished and dispose of your trash properly when you are done.
- **Have a cell phone and a first aid kit handy.** Know any important medical conditions of team members (e.g., heart conditions, diabetes, allergies, etc.) and bring needed medications if any health issues exist.

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