

Information for Inter-Island Foot-Bath Biosecurity Procedure

Biosecurity is concerned with preventing new pests, diseases or invasive species from entering the Falkland Islands as well as preventing any already established pests, diseases and invasive species from being spread around the islands. As an island or strategic through point for visitors and tourists you are in a unique position to help visitors understand biosecurity, and how they can protect the Falkland Islands.

The Falklands are made up of over 750 islands, and each has its own mix of plants and animals. Many invasive species, pests and diseases are confined to just a few areas, and so it is important that we do what we can to prevent the spread of organisms around and between the islands.

Footbaths alone are only effective in preventing the spread of disease so these are being trialled along with a new procedure for checking clothing, boots and luggage/freight when visitors arrive at your location, and well before they visit ecologically sensitive areas and wildlife sites.

Risk Organisms

Visitors arriving at your location could be inadvertently carrying biosecurity risk organisms on their clothing or equipment.

Mud and faeces on boots, clothes and outdoor equipment, such as camera tripods, can transmit diseases or pests from one wildlife colony to a new one. Many naturally occurring diseases such as bird flu can be spread in this way. To limit their impact it is important for ALL people visiting wildlife sites to clean their boots and if necessary vehicle tyres before moving on to another wildlife site in a different part of the Falklands – this is particularly true if there are known or suspected cases of contagious wildlife diseases in the area.

Encourage visitors to check all of their belongings for risk organisms before leaving Stanley, if that is practical, and otherwise immediately on arrival at your location. Things to check include:

- Footwear (particularly soles and fastenings)
- Clothing (velcro, pockets, zips)
- Bags & day sacks
- Camera bags
- Tripods (check feet for mud)
- Any used outdoor equipment

A disinfectant boot dip such as Virkon should be used to clean footwear. If this is not available a weak bleach solution will work just as well. Disinfectants will not stop invasive weed seeds from growing, and so any seeds should be removed by hand and ideally burned or destroyed. A short procedure is suggested below for all new visitors.

Sightings of diseased wildlife should be reported to the land owner and the Department of Agriculture.

Footbath station set up

Set up the footbath station close to the arrival point for visitors. If visitors are arriving by plane, this could be done at the edge of the airstrip. If visitors typically arrive by boat the best place for the station may be at the jetty. It would be best to set up the station on a solid surface and, if possible, under cover. This will minimise the amount of wind-blown debris and be more comfortable for visitors.

Footbaths are for disinfecting, and are not a washing point – organic matter can make the disinfectant less effective. As such, it is useful to set up a basin of water and brush beside the footbath so boots can be cleaned before being disinfected.

You will need:

- Footbath (provided)
- 15 litres water (plus extra for rinsing off)
- 3 Virkon tablets per footbath fill (provided)
- Bucket/tray of water for washing boots
- Brush (provided)
- Poster (either to be pinned up or passed around for visitors to read)
- Gloves (possibly)
- Bin bag for any debris collected (to be burned)

Here's an example of how it might look:



Drop the three tablets into the orange footbath and fill to the 'FILL LEVEL' line about half way up the bath and swirl to dissolve the tablets. This gives a 1% solution, which is suitable for foot dips.

You can, of course, amend the volume of disinfectant in the footbath - as long as you use one tablet per 5 litres, it will be the correct concentration, e.g. just use 5 litres and 1 tablet each time.

Some black string is provided if you need to tie the lid open to save it blowing shut.

Procedure

1. On arrival, brief visitors on the procedure (as described below) explaining why this is important and must be done immediately rather than left until later
2. Ask visitors to check their footwear for mud, seeds, faeces
3. If their boots are dirty, ask visitors to remove any debris, paying particular attention to soles and fastenings. This can be done either by brushing/scraping off dried mud directly into the bin bag. Or, if shoes are wet and muddy, brushing the shoes clean using the bucket of water and brush
4. Then ask each visitor to stand each boot in the footbath ensuring the sole is submerged for at least 5 seconds
5. If anyone is wearing leather boots it is advisable to rinse off boots with fresh water after dipping in the disinfectant as it can damage the leather
6. Check clothing for seeds, especially any velcro, fastenings, pockets, zips and turn ups, putting any debris collected into the bin bag
7. Check any luggage and freight (again focussing on velcro, nooks and crannies, camera bags and camera tripod feet) putting any debris collected into the bin bag



26 September 2022

8. The disinfectant in the footbath will be active for 3-5 days so the water in the footbath needs to be changed at least every 5 days, or when heavily soiled. Once all visitors are done disinfecting, close the lid on the footbath ready for next time *or* if it is at the end of its use, tip the water from the footbath onto the ground
9. Seal the bin bag and take it away to be burned

Thank you!

If you have any questions please contact biosecurity@naturalresources.gov.fk or telephone

the Department of Agriculture on +500 27355