

Method Statement with Regard to Great Crested Newts at
a Former Dwelling at 57 Bryn Glas,
Rhosllanerchrugog,
Wrexham LL14 2EA

Completed 11th November 2019
Ref: 57BGCNMS

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Method Statement with Regard to Great Crested Newts

It is a criminal offence to harm a great crested newt.

Great crested newts (GCN) spend most of their time on land, returning to still water only to breed once they are mature at about 3-4 years of age.

They may travel more than kilometre from their breeding pond.

They move about mostly at night, and by day creep underground or beneath shelter such as stones or logs. They hibernate during the winter, which is generally from the beginning of November until late March, depending on the weather. Hibernation is underground in burrows made by other small animals or beneath substantial cover such as large stones or piles of logs.

1. The supervisor or other designated contractor for the development will be charged with the responsibility of communicating any information relating to GCN on site to the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), a licensed ecologist appointed to the site. This person will be briefed by the ECoW on how to recognise GCN and the procedures for safeguarding them.
2. The house, vegetation and any rubble which is present on site are potential refuges for GCN. The site will be hand searched by the ECoW before demolition of the house and during removal of rubble and vegetation. Any GCN will be placed carefully into a container and released into the surrounding vegetation.
3. Any vegetation will be kept below 10 cm in order to make it less attractive to GCN and other small animals. Vegetation removal will begin in the centre of the site and continue to the outer edges so that any animals present are able to move away. This will be overseen by the ECoW.
4. Any trenches will have a ramp of earth at each end to enable any animals to escape. All trenches will be inspected carefully before infilling, and any animals carefully removed and removed from the area to a place of safety.
5. Building materials will be stored within the fence and clear of the ground (say, on pallets) so as to avoid crushing any animals which might seek refuge under them, when the materials are lifted.
6. Any open pipework will be capped overnight. All open trenches and pipework should be inspected at the start of each working day to ensure no animal is trapped.
7. Any excavated material which is not replaced on the same day must either be removed from the site or stored on a hard surface and covered with an impermeable membrane, such as a plastic sheet or tarpaulin, and the edges of the sheet secured so that no amphibians can gain access.
8. If any great crested newt is discovered in the area of the work, then work in that area must stop and the ECoW contacted immediately for advice. A license from NRW will be required in order to continue.
9. The ECoW may visit the site without notice at any time during the development.

Legislation Relating to Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts are a European protected species. The animals and their eggs, breeding sites and resting places are protected by law.

You may be able to get a licence from Natural England or Natural Resources Wales if you're planning an activity and can't avoid disturbing them or damaging their habitats (ponds and the land around ponds).

What you must not do

Things that would cause you to break the law include:

- capturing, killing, disturbing or injuring great crested newts deliberately
- damaging or destroying a breeding or resting place
- obstructing access to their resting or sheltering places (deliberately or by not taking enough care)
- possessing, selling, controlling or transporting live or dead newts, or parts of them
- taking great crested newt eggs

You could get an unlimited fine and up to 6 months in prison for each offence if you're found guilty.

Activities that can harm great crested newts

Activities that can affect great crested newts include:

- maintaining or restoring ponds, woodland, scrub or rough grassland
- restoring forest areas to lowland heaths
- ploughing close to breeding ponds or other bodies of water
- removing dense vegetation and disturbing the ground
- removing materials like dead wood piled on the ground
- excavating the ground, for example to renovate a building
- filling in or destroying ponds or other water bodies

Building and development work can harm great crested newts and their habitats, for example if it:

- removes habitat or makes it unsuitable
- disconnects or isolates habitats, such as by splitting it up
- changes habitats of other species, reducing the newts' food sources
- increases shade and silt in ponds or other water bodies used by the newts
- changes the water table
- introduces fish, which will eat newt eggs or young
- increases the numbers of people, traffic and pollutants in the area or the amount of chemicals that run off into ponds

In many cases you should be able to avoid harming the newts, damaging or blocking access to their habitats by adjusting your plans. If you can't avoid this, you can apply for a mitigation licence from Natural England or Natural Resources Wales.