

Risk Assessment

Outdoor Experiences

Rockpool & Seashore Experience Risk Assessment & Participant Information

The Rockpool & Seashore Experiences delivered by Galway Atlantaquaria take place in a dynamic coastal environment. While every reasonable precaution is taken to minimise risk, the seashore presents inherent natural hazards.

Participants must be aware of the following potential risks:

Environmental & Surface Hazards

- Slippery rocks and seaweed (including wrack and bladderwrack)
- Uneven terrain, loose stones, and rock crevices
- Sharp shells, barnacles, and broken materials
- Sudden drops between rocks
- Mud, soft sand, or unstable footing

Marine Life & Biological Hazards

- Jellyfish (including washed-up specimens that may still sting)
- Weever fish (venomous dorsal spines in shallow sand)
- Crabs and other marine organisms capable of pinching
- Contact with seaweeds that may cause minor skin irritation
- Seabird or animal droppings (including potential rodent droppings) which may present hygiene risks
- Bacteria associated with seawater or sand

Tidal & Water-Related Hazards

- Incoming tides and changing tidal conditions
- Wave surges and unpredictable swell
- Slippery algae in splash zones
- Cold water exposure
- Risk of slipping into shallow water pools

Weather & Exposure

- Wind exposure
- Cold conditions / wind chill
- Sun exposure and UV risk
- Rain affecting visibility and footing

General Safety Considerations

- Trips, slips, and falls
- Minor cuts, grazes, or bruising
- Allergic reactions (e.g., to stings or environmental factors)
- Fatigue on uneven terrain

Participant Responsibilities

Participants (or guardians) must:

- Follow all staff instructions
- Wear appropriate footwear, gloves, and clothing
- Inform staff of relevant medical conditions or allergies
- Avoid handling Marine Life unless directed
- Maintain awareness of footing and surroundings

Participation in outdoor coastal activities involves inherent environmental risk.

Accessibility & Physical Requirements

Due to the natural beach environment, this experience involves walking on soft sand and uneven terrain. Participants should feel comfortable moving independently across unstable surfaces.

Unfortunately, the location is not currently accessible for wheelchairs or mobility aids.

If you have specific access needs, please contact us in advance and we will be happy to discuss whether the experience is suitable.

By attending, participants acknowledge these natural conditions and agree to follow all safety guidance provided by staff.

Risk Assessment

	Insignificant 1.	Minor 2.	Significant 3.	Major 4.	Severe 5.
Almost certain 5.					
Likely 4.					
Moderate 3.					
Unlikely 2.					
Rare 1.					

Falls & Slippage POSSIBLE 4-2

May occur at some point under normal circumstances

MINOR

Minor injuries causing temporary impairment needing medical treatment

LOW/MED

Mitigation

Strong Shoes, Sure Footing, Due Care when walking and avoiding Slippery Seaweeds.

Avoid walking on **LARGE** rocks.

NEVER walk backwards on a beach.

Infections, Pathogens, & Poisons 4-3

(Dog & Human fecal matter, and other water based infections)

LIKELY

Expected to occur at some point in time

MODERATE

Illness and/or injury requiring hospitalization

LOW/MEDIUM

Mitigation

Avoid placing hand close to mouth and ears, keep hands clean and always sanitise hands when leaving beach.

Check water quality notices.

<https://www.beaches.ie/beaches-lakes/>

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	Insignificant 1.	Minor 2.	Significant 3.	Major 4.	Severe 5.
Almost certain 5.					
Likely 4.					
Moderate 3.					
Unlikely 2.					
Rare 1.					

Cuts & Scrapes POSSIBLE 4-2

May occur at some point under normal circumstances

NOT SIGNIFICANT

Negligible injuries not needing medical treatment

LOW

Mitigation

Wearing gloves & awareness of sharp Barnacles under rocks.

Outdoor activities & experiences take place in natural environments where uneven terrain, changing weather, wildlife, and reduced light levels may present inherent risks. While every reasonable precaution is taken by the Aquarium to assess conditions, provide safety briefings, and supervise participants, some level of risk is unavoidable in outdoor settings.

However, the benefits of outdoor learning and nature-based experiences are significant. Time spent outdoors supports physical health, mental wellbeing, environmental awareness, confidence, and curiosity. Engaging directly with coastal and nocturnal ecosystems fosters a deeper understanding of biodiversity and encourages responsible stewardship of our natural environment.

By participating, individuals acknowledge these natural conditions while benefiting from safe, structured, and educational outdoor experiences.

Risk Assessment

	Insignificant	Minor	Significant	Major	Severe
Almost certain	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
5.					
Likely	4.				
Moderate	3.				
Unlikely	2.				
Rare					