



Litter Cleanup Logistics

Get the Facts

A community-wide effort is recommended. A good first step is to use your Community Appearance Index to identify hot spots in your community for cleanup.

To involve the entire community, meet with the local government (public works, solid waste/sanitation, planning and/or administrative department(s), downtown organization, and neighborhood associations to determine areas of need to be cleaned up, beautified and/or improved.

Affiliates may want to schedule their Litter Index 2-3 weeks prior to Target Date to identify problem litter areas and/or utilize the Community Appearance Index.

According to the 2020 Litter Study:

- There are 50 billion pieces of litter along U.S. roadways and waterways. 50 billion pieces of litter equate to 152 pieces of litter for every U.S. resident. People can visualize 152 pieces of litter where they live, and they can begin to see that the litter problem can be solved.
- Nine out of ten pieces of litter on the ground in the U.S. were under four inches in size.
- Cigarette butts continue to be the single most littered item in the United States.
- Litter on America's roads was down 54 percent since 2009.

Prioritize the Behaviors

Now that you've been a sustainable sleuth and gathered all your evidence. You need to identify what behaviors you'd like to change with your event.

What key message do you want to resonate most with attendees and participants?

You can consider the following actions:



1. Will a community-wide cleanup help focus attention on the litter problem that continues to plague our environment?
2. How will this project allow litterers to recognize their role in community degradation?
3. Who can help reinforce and spread your message?



Develop & Implement Action Plan

Locations that may need attention include:

- rights-of-way
- gateway(s)
- park(s)
- non-profit community area
- historic area
- neighborhoods
- school yard
- vacant lot
- downtown
- hiking trails/bike path
- illegal dump site(s)
- riverbank/lakefront
- highway embankment
- railroad right-of-way

Sometimes permits must be obtained to clean up and beautify certain areas. Appoint someone to find out what may be required.

You need to determine if the property is public or private. If private property is involved, you will need permission from the landowner, preferably in writing.

Boundaries

Once you have decided what area(s) to target, establish cleanup boundaries. Remember to set realistic goals - trying to clean an area too large will only make your efforts seem small. Consider dividing roads into 1–2-mile sections or parks into acre plots.

Team Leaders

Naming team leaders is helpful for large cleanup or beautification projects. Team leaders may be assigned to each site within the boundaries or mile markers along a highway. These individuals make sure their cleanup runs smoothly and safely, and they report participation and collection results.

Along waterways the leaders can be placed strategically along the shoreline or embankment.

Team leaders should be trained in advance of your activity so they can answer any question that a volunteer may have.

Be sure that property ownership has granted permission for any work to be accomplished. For government rights-of-way this may be granted through a proclamation or resolution. For private property this may require a written letter or waiver form. Be sure coordinator and/or team/task force member is designated to check in advance to see what may be required.

Who should you contact for hauling?

Begin by contacting your government offices to let them know about your cleanup plans.

Determine if they can assist you with waste hauling – or if you will need to partner with a private hauler. Be sure to coordinate drop off and/or collection filled bags.



Work with your waste hauler to determine the best locations for volunteers to drop their bags off for pick-up, and if they can weigh the trash collected. If they are not able to weigh the waste for you, you will have to have your team leaders keep track of the weight or count the number of bags and large items collected.

About Tipping Fees

Landfill operators charge a "tipping fee" to dispose of waste. Occasionally these fees are waived and considered as an in-kind contribution. The fees may be absorbed by the city or waste hauler. You should determine as quickly as possible to determine the party that will be responsible for incurring this cost.

Tools and Safety Equipment

Tools that your volunteers will find useful include:

- Trash bags
- 5-gallon buckets (a more sustainable option than using trash bags)
- Litter pickers
- Rakes
- Flat tipped shovels

Suggested safety equipment for your cleanup include:

- Gloves
- Traffic vests
- Cones
- Roadwork signs (for roadside cleanups)
- First aid kit

Please note that other safety equipment may be needed depending on what you are cleaning and where.

Litter Cleanup Tips

DOs

Group Leader:

- Conduct a safety talk at the beginning of the activity so volunteers understand how to safely pick up litter
- Know emergency procedures, such as the location of the nearest emergency facility and how to quickly summon the police or an ambulance
- Have a first aid kit and mobile phone on hand
- Provide adequate adult supervision if you involve youth groups in litter removal (e.g., at least 1 adult to 8 participants between the ages of 10 - 17)
- Reconvene every hour to make sure that all participants are accounted for, safe and enjoying the cleanup if going into a heavily wooded or large area
- Consider using walkie-talkies as a communication device between groups
- Arrange a "Thank You" party for all of the volunteers after the cleanup
- Take BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER pictures to show off your work!



Individuals:

- Wear gloves; thick-soled, closed shoes; long pants; and long-sleeved shirts
- Wear safety vests or bright colors for roadside cleanups
- Wear sunscreen and bug repellent
- Drink plenty of fluids and keep "quick energy foods" on hand
- Be aware of your surroundings and the potential hazards (e.g., passing cars, poisonous ivy, overgrown vegetation)
- Use the "buddy system" to work in teams of two or three to maximize safety
- Wash hands with antibacterial soap after the cleanup
- Bag litter to meet local regulations

DON'Ts

Group Leader:

- Don't schedule cleanups during peak pedestrian or traffic hours
- Don't conduct cleanups during extremely inclement weather (if possible)
- Don't allow small children to participate in cleans up near major traffic corridors

Individuals:

- Don't pick up hazardous materials such as hypodermic needles, sharp objects, condoms, animal carcasses or other unidentified, questionable objects – **report to team leader**
- Don't overstuff bags
- Don't attempt to move large objects – call your local fire or police department to report illegal dumping and for instructions on how to proceed
- Don't bring pets, as they may distract participants or even detract from the cleanup
- Don't overdo it physically

Evaluate Impacts

Volunteer groups will be responsible for keeping track of the total number of bags of clothing collected to include in your report.

How will you measure the behavior change impacts and specific community improvements?

- **Results Worksheet**
- **Reporting Instructions**
- **Volume to Weight Conversions**

Provide Feedback

- Say "Thank You"
- What's the most successful and what can be improved upon?
- Who should be consulted on this step?
- How do you communicate that to community leaders and stakeholders?