**THE GREATEST AMERICAN CLEANUPTM**

**Become a Cleanup Captain! | A How-To Guide for Organizing a Corporate Cleanup**

*Updated: February 25, 2025*

**WHAT IS A CLEANUP CAPTAIN?**

A Cleanup Captain is a volunteer who is willing to step in and lead others as part of the Greatest American Cleanup. Cleanup captains inspire and recruit employees to attend cleanups and pick up 250 pieces of trash each, and helps ensure everyone reports their progress to Keep America Beautiful.

**WHY BECOME A CLEANUP CAPTAIN?**

Taking on the role of Cleanup Captain offers a unique opportunity to participate in the Greatest American Cleanup in a way that also fosters camaraderie amongst your colleagues. By working together to advance our collective goal of picking up 25 billion pieces of litter by America’s 250th birthday, being a Cleanup Captain allows you to make a tangible difference in your local community.

* **Positive Impact:** Organizing a cleanup event goes beyond just making your neighborhood look better, it directly contributes to a healthier and more sustainable environment for everyone. Picking up litter and restoring natural spaces plays a vital role in creating a more beautiful community ahead of America’s big birthday.
* **Team Building:** Working together towards a common goal, such as cleaning up a local park, can be a powerful team-building exercise. This shared experience can strengthen bonds and create a sense of unity within your team, just like the Greatest American Cleanup is building unity amongst all Americans.
* **Inspiring Action:** Leading by example is a powerful motivator. By organizing and participating in a cleanup, you are inspiring your team to take action and become more environmentally conscious. This collective effort goes beyond just a few individuals, and encourages others in the local community to get involved as well.
* **Civic Pride + Unity:** Joining the Greatest American Cleanup aligns your company with a national movement that celebrates our unique country and the individuals that make it special. It’s an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to clean, green, and beautify our nation ahead of July 4, 2026.

**STEPS TO ORGANIZE A CLEANUP**

**Step 1: Gather Your Team**

* Spread the Word: Use your company's internal communication channels (email, Slack, company-wide meetings) to invite your colleagues to join your cleanup crew.
* Form a Team: Assign roles like event coordinator, supplies organizer, and communication lead.
* Set a Date: Choose a date and time that works for most of your team. Consider weekends or evenings for maximum participation.

**Step 2: Plan Your Cleanup**

* Choose a Location: Identify a public space that needs some TLC, such as a local park, beach, or neighborhood street.
* Gather Supplies: Make sure you have access to the cleanup kits provided by Keep America Beautiful. If you need more supplies, consider having your team use what they might already have at home (i.e. plastic grocery bags, gloves, etc.).
* Create a Safety Plan: Ensure everyone's safety by following the clear instructions and guidelines laid out in your cleanup kit. Consider first-aid kits and emergency contact information.
* Capture Content: Capture before-and-after shots of the cleaned-up areas. Focus on the most significant changes or improvements.

**Step 3: Identify Target Locations and Obtain Necessary Permissions**

* Prioritize: Determine areas that most need attention. Consider factors like litter accumulation, safety concerns, and community impact.
* Potential Locations:
  + Local parks or beaches
  + Main streets or town squares/town commons
  + Public playgrounds
  + Downtown areas
  + Hiking trails/bike paths
  + Riverbanks/lakefronts
* Research Requirements: Determine if permits or permissions are needed for specific areas.

**Step 4: Promote Your Event**

* Use Social Media: Share your event on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Encourage your colleagues to invite friends and family. Don’t forget to use the creative assets provided by Keep America Beautiful!
* Create a Signup Sheet: Use a digital tool (Google Forms, Eventbrite) to collect RSVPs and contact information.
* Send Reminders: A friendly reminder a few days before the event can help boost attendance.

**Step 5: Make Cleanup Day a Blast**

* Assign Tasks: Divide your team into groups and assign specific areas or tasks.
* Play Music: Create a fun atmosphere with upbeat music.
* Offer Refreshments: Provide snacks and drinks to keep your team energized. Perhaps your company or another local company will donate water and/or healthy goodies!

**Step 6: Logistics and Planning**

* Hauling: Contact government offices or private haulers to arrange waste disposal, if needed.
* Drop-Off Locations: Determine convenient locations for volunteers to discard collected trash.

**Step 7: Safety Guidelines**

* Conduct Safety Talks: Provide clear instructions on safe litter pickup practices.
* Emergency Procedures: Ensure team members know emergency procedures and have necessary equipment.
* Safety Measures: Encourage volunteers to wear appropriate clothing and footwear, stay hydrated, and be aware of surroundings.

**Step 8: Evaluate and Report**

* Collect Data: Keep track of the volume of trash collected.
* Measure Impact: Assess the effectiveness of the cleanup and identify areas for improvement.
* Share Results: [Report the cleanup's](https://kab.tfaforms.net/182) success to Keep America Beautiful.
* Provide Feedback: Gather feedback from volunteers and community members on what worked well and what could use work for next year!

**Step 9: Celebrate, Share + Continue Momentum**

* Celebrate Success: Recognize the efforts of volunteers and celebrate the achievements. Consider gathering the Cleanup Crew either immediately after the event or a couple of days later at a restaurant or bar to celebrate the great work you did. Perhaps your company will foot the bill for a job well done!
* Share Your Impact: Share a summary of your impact on social media channels and on corporate intranet, Hub; post pictures, tag your colleagues who participated and @KeepAmericaBeautiful and #GreatestAmericanCleanup. Consider sending an internal email to celebrate your success; include pictures and videos of “before” and “after” to demonstrate impact.
* Continue the Efforts + Pass the Baton: Challenge one or more of your colleagues to become the next Cleanup Captain(s) and hold cleanups of their own – maybe it’s one cleanup per month! Make it a competition to see who can pick up the most pieces of litter on their Cleanup day.