

Guidelines for Community Litter Picks

Please take note of the following guidelines to ensure your group or school has a successful and safe litter pick.

Before the Litter Pick

A. Carry out an appropriate risk assessment by:

1. Visiting litter pick sites beforehand and consider whether they are suitable. For example, sites near a busy road or fast flowing deep water may require special arrangements or be considered too dangerous.
2. Look for potential litter hazards such as unidentified containers, poisons, glass, condoms or syringes. Special arrangements or equipment may be required if such items are present or it may be advisable to avoid the area entirely and report the problem to the appropriate authority or landowner.
3. Ensure the litter pick is manageable in the allotted time. Two shorter clean-ups may be easier to cope with than one long one, particularly if children are involved.
4. Ensure you are aware of any relevant medical condition any of the volunteers may have. They may wish to consider maintaining immunisation against polio, typhoid and tetanus.
5. Depending on the weather conditions, you may wish to provide sun screen.
6. Let volunteers know what they should wear (appropriate to the weather conditions). Strong boots or shoes are essential in all weathers.
7. If children are involved, make sure there will be adequate supervision on the day of at least one adult per five children.

B. Check whether permission from a landowner is required.

C. Make arrangements with the Council to borrow the required equipment. The Council is able to lend high visibility vests, gloves and litter picking sticks and to provide refuse sacks to community groups, Parish Councils and schools. Ensure arrangements are in place with collection of the rubbish; the Council can assist with this.

D. You may wish to take out suitable insurance for your volunteers/event. Check with your existing insurance company to see if litter picks are covered.

On the Day

1. Ensure all volunteers meet at a designated assembly point at a specified time.
2. Take a list of names and addresses and contact numbers in case of an accident and ensure all participants are recorded as having finished at the end of the event.

3. Brief participants on:
 - Who the supervisor/s are
 - Possible hazards to avoid
 - Health and safety precautions including use of tools
 - Not to disturb plants or wildlife
 - Where to put rubbish for collection
 - Time and place for breaks
 - Any washing and toilet facilities
 - What to do in the event of an emergency
4. Health and Safety Precautions
 - Participants should carry mobile phones wherever possible in case of emergencies
 - Carry a first aid kit and have a trained first aider present
 - Ensure everyone knows who the first aider is, where the telephone is and what to do in the event of an emergency
 - Any cuts and grazes should be covered with a waterproof plaster
 - All participants should wear heavy duty waterproof gloves
 - Do not touch eyes or mouth while working
 - Participants should not attempt to pick up syringes by hand as they are sharp enough to penetrate the thickest gloves
 - Be careful of slippery surfaces (eg rocks)
 - Take care when moving sharp or heavy objects - bend at the knees, not the back
 - Participants should wash any exposed skin thoroughly, particularly before eating

After the Event

1. Check that all participants are accounted for.
2. Ensure that all loaned equipment is counted back in and returned to the Council.
3. Collected rubbish should be appropriately bagged-up for collection.
4. Any gates shut or locked as required.
5. Report any incidents or dangerous items to the appropriate authorities (if in doubt, ask Eden District Council).

Please note these guidelines cover litter picks on land only and do not extend to water clean-ups, for which special arrangements are required. In such cases, it may be appropriate to contact the Environment Agency for specialist advice.

For more information:

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