

Volunteer Guide to Picking up Litter

SAFETY

Volunteering for a litter cleanup event can be a rewarding and fun experience for all involved and should not be strenuous or hazardous work. However, there are some safety rules and guidelines that everyone should follow to make these events enjoyable, safe, and worthwhile.

Do be prepared to safely participate:

- ✓ Bring a pair of garden gloves unless gloves are being supplied on-site;
- ✓ Bring a litter/trash picker if you have access to one;
- ✓ Wear closed toe shoes;
- ✓ Bring water for hydration and a light snack;
- ✓ Bring a phone or camera to document what you clean up!
- ✓ Wear a safety vest if you have access to one;

Do not pick-up hazardous items! This could include:

- ✗ Guns or knives;
- ✗ Broken glass;
- ✗ Partially buried items;
- ✗ Closed or sealed buckets and plastic or metal drums;
- ✗ Medical waste (hazard bags, needles, etc.);
- ✗ Dead animals; or
- ✗ Anything that you feel unsafe or uncomfortable handling

If you encounter any of these items, take note of the location and report it to your team leader or site coordinator. Appropriate personnel may be able to safely collect these items.

Never reach or crawl into crevices, brush, under rocks or structures to retrieve debris. Always use a tool when necessary or if something is just out of arms reach.

Most cleanup sites are in areas where wildlife exists, even in urban environments. Please keep an eye out for areas where snakes, harmful insects, or other wildlife may be present. If you encounter them, give them their space and alert those in your party to the presence of any of these creatures. Also be on the lookout for harmful plants such as: poison ivy, poison oak, thorns, vines etc. Please wear gloves to avoid contact. Refrain from contact with any wildlife or feral domestic animals.

The local site coordinators and leaders for the event you are volunteering at may establish additional guidelines for their particular site, as each site has unique opportunities that may not be covered by these general guidelines.

WHAT TO WEAR?

Please wear clothing appropriate for working outdoors, the weather, and the area where you will be working such as: gloves, boots, hats/caps, long pants, long-sleeved shirts, etc. Sturdy closed toed shoes should be worn in all areas; no matter how warm it may be please do not wear sandals or flip-flops. Depending on your cleanup



site location, your clothes might get wet and/or dirty. Be prepared by bringing additional clothing or shoes as appropriate. Group leaders should make sure that everyone in their group is wearing appropriate footwear.

VALUABLES

When attending an organized cleanup event, make sure your belongings and valuables are secure or simply leave them at home. Cleanup sites will not be responsible for your lost or stolen valuables.

COMFORT GUIDELINES

Guidelines for staying comfortable during a cleanup event can be found below:

- Make sure to bring an insect repellent and/or sunscreen or other appropriate cosmetics necessary for your safety and health. Sunscreens and insect repellents may not be supplied by the cleanup sites.
- Wear hats, caps, and sunglasses as appropriate

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CLEANUP

Sometimes litter can be very small; however, it still has a big impact. Don't be discouraged if you are cleaning up a site that only has small pieces of litter or debris, such as candy wrappers or cigarette butts, as this still impacts that overall health of our environment. If at first glance the location you are cleaning does not look very littered, take a closer look along curbs, in parking lots, around storm drains, or along the brush-line where litter tends to accumulate.

If you are concerned about encountering wildlife, such as snakes, at a cleanup event, consider participating at events held during colder months. Not only are they likely to not be out, but it should also be easier to spot them when vegetation is scarcer.

Remember to not wander onto anyone's private property or dispose of any litter or items in their trash or recycling carts.

Have fun and take a few moments to enjoy the nature and beauty around you!

