



## **Holding a litter-pick event**

Please take note of the following guidance to ensure you and your group has a successful and safe litter pick.

### **General Guidance:**

- Groups must have at least one adult co-ordinator present at all times during the litter pick.
- The co-ordinator is responsible for:
  - Undertaking a risk assessment and gaining appropriate approval in advance of the litter-pick
  - Ensuring this guidance is followed
  - Knowing exactly who is taking part and checking numbers on the day
  - Briefing the group on any emergency procedures
  - Collecting and distributing equipment
- Other considerations:
  - Ensure all appointed adults have a working mobile phone and all participants have the correct mobile phone numbers.
  - Make sure you have a safe meeting place to give a briefing, and to start and return to – especially if the weather deteriorates
  - Do not allow unaccompanied young children to take part or attend clean-ups. Members of youth groups must have parental permission.
  - Ensure children are supervised at all times.
  - Maintain a working group of 6-10 people
  - Be considerate towards wildlife and avoid disturbing animals and birds. Do not remove natural habitats such as logs and stones
  - Ensure the rubbish to be collected by the council is stored safely, and does not cause an obstruction

### **Clothing and Safety**

- Volunteers should wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Flip flops and open toed footwear is not recommended
- Under no circumstances should participants pick up litter with their hands (gloved or otherwise)

- Do not work near roads with a speed limit of more than 30 mph, on steep banks, near fast flowing or deep water, derelict buildings or edges with steep drops that could be considered dangerous
- Do not work on the road, central reservations, roundabouts or islands. Stay on the pavement/verge away from live traffic at least 1.5m from the kerb.
- When working near roads always face oncoming traffic and work on one side of the pavement at a time.
- Do not work in darkness or bad weather conditions i.e. when the ground is icy or visibility is reduced

## Health & Wellbeing

- Ensure group has access to First Aid materials, anti-bacterial wipes or soap and water.
- To avoid injury, the following basic principles of manual handling should be applied:
  - Use litter pickers to prevent constant bending and stretching
  - Make sure an item is safe to handle with no sharp edges or noxious contents
  - Ensure bags are not overfilled
  - Event coordinator to indicate where filled bags are to be placed at the end of the event
- Volunteers are not expected to separate recyclable items of litter, but if they are willing to do so this, it would be welcomed. Details will be provided in advance of your event according to your local authority guidelines

## Hazardous Items

- Broken glass:
  - Broken glass is common and presents a big hazard. **On no account should it be collected as it presents a danger to those collecting and irreparably damages the litter collecting bags**
- Fly-tipped waste
  - Sometimes on a litter pick, you might come across a site where the rubbish is more than simply the casually discarded items that accumulate over time. If people are willing to illegally discard waste, it is unlikely they will have taken precautions regarding the safety of that waste. Unidentified liquids in containers could be hazardous and other harmful

materials such as asbestos (which can be more expensive to dispose of) are more likely to be found at illegal dumps. **On no account should it be collected. Please make a note of the location of the fly-tipped material and report that to the local authority**

- Sharps/Items associated with drug use
  - Another issue, particularly in more secluded areas is the danger of finding items associated with drug use e.g. needles & syringes
  - **On no account should these be collected. Please make a note of the location of the drug paraphernalia and report that to the local authority**

### **Disclaimer**

- Volunteers should not participate in litter picks unless they understand and accept that participation is entirely at their own risk
- These safety precautions are for your guidance only, circumstances can differ depending on the situation. It will be the responsibility of the co-ordinator to ensure all possible safety measures are taken by the group
- Volunteers are not working for, or on behalf of South West London Environment Network and/or any local authority. These parties will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused because of the actions and omissions of volunteers or this guidance

*Reviewed 1/11/2020*