

## Guidelines for community litter picking events

Read these useful guidelines to make sure your group has a successful and safe litter pick.

### Before the litter pick

1. **Visit the site** to see whether it is suitable. For example, sites near a busy road or fast flowing deep water may be too dangerous, or need special arrangements put in place.
2. **Look for potential litter hazards** like unidentified containers, poisons, glass, condoms or syringes. You might need special equipment or support to remove hazardous items – or you might choose to avoid the area entirely and report the problem to the appropriate authority or landowner.
3. **Check whether you need permission** from a landowner.
4. **If you need to borrow equipment, ask us.** We can lend community groups litter pickers and high-vis vests, and provide rubbish bags, if we have enough available. Contact us on 01946 59800, or at [info@copeland.gov.uk](mailto:info@copeland.gov.uk), to ask. Equipment can be collected a couple of days before the litter pick from our office at **Whitehaven Commercial Park, Moresby Parks, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 8YD**. This equipment will be signed out, and back in again when you return it. Please return it shortly after the event, as other groups may want to borrow it.
5. **Ensure collection arrangements** are made. Small amounts of litter can be taken home to your bin, or you can take it to a Household Waste Recycling Centre. Otherwise, tell us beforehand so we can arrange to pick up the bags. You can contact us on 01946 598300, or at [info@copeland.gov.uk](mailto:info@copeland.gov.uk).
6. **Check your 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.
7. **You may wish to take out insurance** for your volunteers/event. Check with your existing insurance company to see if litter picks are covered.
8. **Make sure you are aware of any relevant medical conditions** among your volunteers. They may wish to consider maintaining immunisation against polio, typhoid and tetanus.

9. **Let volunteers know what they should wear**, appropriate to the weather conditions and site. Strong boots or shoes are essential in all weathers.

10. **If children are involved**, make sure there will be adequate supervision on the day of at least one adult per five children.

11. **If you plan to take photographs**, let people know so that they can opt out if they wish.

## **On the day**

1. **Make sure everyone meets up** at an arranged place at a specified time.

2. **Take a list of names**, addresses and contact numbers in case of an accident, and make sure everyone is 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 if they can, in case there is an emergency.
- It's a good idea to have a trained first aider present, with access to a first aid kit. Make sure everyone knows who they are.
- Any cuts and grazes should be covered with a waterproof plaster.
- All participants should wear heavy duty waterproof gloves.
- People should not touch their 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.
- Urge people to take care on slippery surfaces.
- Ask people to be careful when moving anything sharp or large, and to bend at the knees, not the back, when moving something heavy.
- Participants should wash thoroughly after the litter pick, and particularly before eating.

## **After the event**

1. Check that everyone is accounted for.
2. If you have borrowed equipment from us, count it back in and return it to us as soon as you can.
3. Make sure the rubbish is bagged up for collection, with larger items safely alongside (at the appointed place if you have arranged collection).
4. Close or lock any gates as required.
5. Report any incidents or dangerous items to the appropriate authorities (if in doubt, ask us).

These guidelines cover litter picks on land, and do not extend to water clean-ups, for which special arrangements are needed. In such cases, please contact the Environment Agency for specialist advice.

### **For more information:**

Call 01946 598300

Email [info@copeland.gov.uk](mailto:info@copeland.gov.uk)

Visit [www.copeland.gov.uk](http://www.copeland.gov.uk)

Write to us at Copeland Borough Council, Market Hall, Market Place, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 7JG.