



World Cleanup Day UK

ORGANISING YOUR OWN CLEANUP IN 7 STEPS

Based on World Cleanup Guidelines by Let's Do It World

Introduction

World Cleanup Day takes place every September, with volunteers and partners worldwide coming together to clean up litter and waste from communities, beaches, rivers and forests. This guide gives you the information you need to organise a safe and sustainable cleanup.

Organising a cleanup in 7 steps

1. Choosing your cleanup site

You may already be thinking of a local area that needs some love and attention. Here are some other things to consider when choosing a site:

How will people travel to the site for the cleanup?

Where will they meet?

How will the waste be collected and what will happen to it afterwards?

It's a good idea to visit the site before the cleanup to check the area and get an idea of how much waste there is and of what type(s).

Other questions you may have:

What equipment do I need? We suggest 30l waste bags, protective gloves, litter pickers, hoops, high-vis garments, water, first aid kit and hand wipes. Use recycled bags and reusable items if you can so as not to create more waste.

How long will it take? We suggest 2 hours is long enough for a cleanup event. You can make a big difference in that time, and you can always return at a later date if more time is needed.

Where do we leave the filled bags of waste and recyclables for collection? This is something you will need to agree with the local authority.

2. Risk management

Cleanups are not usually dangerous, but accidents can happen and it's always best to be prepared.

Do a risk assessment. When you visit the site, look out for possible risks such as traffic, the neighbourhood, the landscape, nature, and man-made infrastructure (power grids, pipelines etc.). Make plans for how to deal with these things on the day. Try to avoid risky locations.

Prepare a basic first aid kit that includes wound care (e.g. bandages, gauze roll, scissors, tweezers, hand sanitiser, medical gloves). Make sure there is at least one person in the group who can provide first aid.

Check the weather forecast and make sure you are prepared for the conditions. Be ready to cancel or postpone in the case of adverse weather. Tell volunteers to wear suitable clothing and footwear. If it's hot, remind them to drink plenty of water, use sunscreen and wear a hat.

Make sure volunteers are equipped for protection and safety. We suggest gloves, weather-appropriate clothing, high-vis vests and closed-toe shoes or boots. Arms and legs should be covered to avoid scratches and stings.

Have all important contact and emergency numbers handy. Keep a record of the names and mobile numbers of all your volunteers. Make sure their phones are fully charged and they know who to call if there is a problem.

3. Preparing for the cleanup

Contact the local authority to tell them about the cleanup and ask them to collect and dispose of the waste you gather.

Equipment: some local organisations can help by loaning out cleanup tools and providing free waste bags. World Cleanup Day UK may be able to tell you more about this for your area.

Do you need insurance? You may decide that each volunteer should be responsible for themselves and their own actions, and you can also ask volunteers to sign a disclaimer. However, if you do decide to insure the cleanup event, try asking your local authority, who may be able to cover you under their own public liability insurance. If you are organising a corporate volunteering cleanup, check if this can be covered by your organisation's insurance. Some other organisations offer cheap insurance to their members, and there are also insurance companies who specialise in volunteer insurance (e.g. Zurich Insurance).

4. Promoting the cleanup

Tell people about your event and ask for their help. Social media is a great way to do this, e.g. community and litter picking Facebook sites. You can also design posters and flyers.

Make it clear what you will be providing on the day and what volunteers should bring along themselves (e.g. gloves, bags, water, etc.).

Register your volunteers and **make sure everyone knows where and when to meet.** It's useful to have their contact details handy on the day to coordinate the cleanup.

5. Cleanup day

Welcome the volunteers and provide safety and cleanup instructions.

Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged and you are reachable all the time in case of an emergency.

Designate cleanup areas to pairs or groups of volunteers and distribute cleanup materials.

Make a plan to sort the collected waste into recyclable groups (e.g. glass, tins, plastics, tyres) and make sure everyone knows what to do if they find unexpected or hazardous items.

6. Keeping everyone safe

“If it is not safe, do not do it. If you are not sure whether it is safe, do not do it.”

Think **SAFETY FIRST** while cleaning up the site. Make sure volunteers know how to keep themselves and others safe.

Organise volunteers into pairs or small groups, so that if anyone gets into difficulty there are others who can help.

Make sure volunteers have **appropriate clothing and safety equipment**. Tell them not to lift heavy weights and to rest if they get tired.

Warn volunteers not to handle any unknown containers, hazardous materials or dangerous chemicals. If you find anything that you think may be dangerous, do not touch it. The location should be flagged and reported to the local authority environmental health team, the Environment Agency (T: 03708 506 506) or Crimestoppers (T: 0800 555 111).

Do not enter private land, hazardous areas or unstable ground. Where signs or common sense indicate such an area, exercise caution and stay away.

Pay attention to children’s safety. The site may seem like a fascinating playground to them, and their parents need to be aware of potential threats and hazardous objects. Make sure parents know that they should supervise their children closely.

Finally, **do not harm the environment** during the cleanup.

In case of an accident:

Call 999 if someone is injured. Tell emergency services clearly what happened, where and to whom. Follow their instructions. Give first aid if needed and if you are qualified to do so. Monitor the injured person’s conditions until the emergency services arrive.

Stop your cleanup work.

Stay calm and ensure your own safety and that of others.

7. Afterwards

Check with the local authority to make sure the waste you gathered gets collected.

Tell World Cleanup Day UK about the number of people who took part in the cleanup and the total number of 30l waste bags collected. We would also love to see your cleanup event photos.

Email us at wcd@theskillmill.org and/or share the details on social media (<https://www.facebook.com/worldcleanupuk>; <https://twitter.com/WorldCleanupUK>; <https://www.instagram.com/worldcleanupuk/>; <https://www.youtube.com/user/Letsdoitworld>).

And finally:

Celebrate! You did a wonderful thing! Be proud!



About us

World Cleanup Day UK

World Cleanup Day UK coordinates World Cleanup Day in the UK and is also a member of the international Let's Do It World network. It is a project of the Skill Mill.

The Skill Mill

The Skill Mill is the host of World Cleanup Day UK. Its core mission is to employ and train young ex-offenders to carry out environmental improvement projects across the UK in partnership with local authorities and others, leading to positive social and environmental outcomes.

Let's Do It World

Let's Do It World is the international coordinating body for World Cleanup Day, its flagship project. It is one of the world's largest environmental networks, with active leaders and teams tackling the global waste problem in 190 countries.

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