

# Public Litter Cleanup Guide

Waste Reduction Week



# Thank you for participating in a Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks cleanup!

If you have questions, please read through the FAQ guide available on [www.ontario.ca/actonlitter](http://www.ontario.ca/actonlitter) or contact [ActONlitter@ontario.ca](mailto:ActONlitter@ontario.ca).



## Promote Your Cleanup!

We encourage all to promote cleanups on social media using the hashtag #ActONlitter, and to your friends and family leading up to your cleanup.

On the day of your cleanup have fun and share instant results in your online community! We encourage you to share 'before and after' photos of your cleanup and the Cleanup site on social media using the hashtag #ActONlitter!



## QUICK TIPS

- Keep cleanups small-scale and part of the same household.  
[Click here for more information.](#)
- Stay home and away from others if you are feeling ill or have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Practice safe physical distancing (at least 2 metres apart)
- Follow the current gathering limits for indoor and outdoor gatherings.
- Wear a face covering indoors and when keeping physical distance of at least two metres is not possible.
- Use personal protective equipment (gloves) or a litter grabber when picking up litter and properly dispose of your own personal protective equipment safely in a sealed garbage bin after your cleanup.
- Cleanups should take place during daylight hours and should not take place after sunset or before sunrise.
- Identify a responsible method for disposing of your collected litter. Consider filling small bags for your cleanup and disposing in your own personal garbage and recycling collection bins.

Let's work together to prevent, reduce, divert and act on waste at work, at home, in our communities...everywhere! Please refer to our checklist and helpful tips below as you participate in a community cleanup.

# CHECKLIST:



## Leading up to the cleanup

- Choose a cleanup day.
- Identify cleanup team participants - cleanups should be organized by households and in keeping with COVID-19 public health safety measures.
- Only include participants within your household. Click here for the most recent COVID-19 safety protocols <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>.
- Choose a cleanup site, start time and meeting location to share with participants.
- Gather protective equipment, such as gloves or a litter grabber, for the cleanup team or ensure they will be bringing their own. It is also a great idea to have hand sanitizer available.
- If using a public space, contact your municipality to identify if any permits are required to host a cleanup there and request help obtaining a permit (if applicable). If using a private space, ensure you have permission from the property owner.
- Choose a disposal method, a few examples include:
  - Personal garbage and recycling bins. You may need to speak with your condo or apartment building management about disposing through their waste collection services.
  - If no available method exists for you, reach out to your municipality to see if they can support your disposal, such as by using a city street disposal garbage can and recycling bin.
- Print off Litter Trackers for you and your cleanup participants or ask your participants to pre-print their own. The Litter Tracker allows you to document important cleanup information, track the material of litter you collect and submit this information to the ministry. Don't forget to bring a pen to the cleanup to complete this tracker!

- Share important information with cleanup participants ahead of your cleanup, using the collected contact information, such as:
  - safety tips/recycling tips
  - reminder of what to bring (e.g. garbage and recycling collection bags, water bottle, appropriate clothing for the weather, reusable mask and gloves that can be washed or disposable options that can be responsibly disposed of after the cleanup, etc.)
  - when and where you are meeting

## On the day of the cleanup



- Prepare any of your coordinator materials (participant attendee list, pens, first aid kit, hand sanitizer, etc.).
- Meet your cleanup team at your scheduled meeting date, time and location.
- Go over:
  - safety requirements (i.e. physical distancing and personal protective gear)
  - cleanup boundary
  - end time and meeting point
  - contact information
  - disposal requirements
- Have participants complete their Litter Tracker as they pick up litter.
- Have fun! Take photos of your progress and your cleanup team – consider taking a before and after photo of your site to show the progress. Post photos publicly to social media using the #ActONlitter hashtag for the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to see and consider sharing!

## After the cleanup

- Submit all Litter Tracker information to the ministry by completing this [Litter Cleanup Report Back form](#).

## SAFETY TIPS!



Safety first! Review the safety tips below and take the necessary precautions during your community cleanup.

- Wear personal protective equipment.
- Be mindful of unstable or slippery ground (e.g. ravines, river banks), in tunnels or near stormwater management ponds.
- Consider wearing a safety vest or brightly coloured clothing if collecting litter along a roadway.
- Do not pick up dangerous materials such as glass, barbed wire, syringes/needles, medical waste, pipes, chemicals and debris with sharp or rusted edges. Instead note down the item and the location, and after your cleanup contact your local waste management department to make them aware.
- Avoid water-filled areas such as ditches, streams or ponds. Be extra cautious in areas where there could be water or ice.
- Be careful of wild animals, insects, hives and nests, and noxious weeds such as poison ivy and giant hogweed.
- Report suspicious items to the local police department via their non-emergency telephone number or to the Ontario Provincial Police non-emergency number at 1-888-310-1122.

## RECYCLING TIPS



- Use separate disposal bags for recyclables and general litter whenever possible.
- Some municipalities have a mobile waste app that you can use on the go to find out what items should be recycled versus put in the garbage – check with your local municipality and download the app in advance if available!
- Keep hazardous waste separate from garbage and recycling. Hazardous waste includes batteries, aerosol containers, fluorescent tubes, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), helium and propane tanks/cylinders. Remember safety first! You can always leave certain items as you found them, note down the item and the location, and after your cleanup contact your local waste management department to make them aware.



## CLEANUP SITE IDEAS

- Trails
- Common play areas in your community
- A public park
- The sidewalks along a neighborhood street
- Vacant lots or parking lots (ensure you have owner's permission)

