

River Clean Up Guidelines



To keep everyone safe and avoid covid-19 exposure use the following guide to help you organize your River Clean Up event.

REGISTRATION & COVID

- Request registration digitally or by phone with a limit of volunteers a minimum of 15 days before the event.
- Have every participant sign a waiver that can be sent and returned via email or attached to your online registration platform (Google Forms, SignUp Genius, Your Rotary Club's website etc.)
- Make sure all the clean ups are done in small groups (families, friends, etc) or in pairs practicing social distancing and local regulations
- Volunteers must sign a release of liability and submit a wellness self-assessment upon registration and ask them to refrain from participating and notify organizers if they develop any symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days before the event
- Participants must also agree to notify the organizers if they develop symptoms up to 14 days after the event.
- Send a follow-up communication to volunteers a week before and 24 hours before the event to confirm the absence of symptoms.

PPE & SUPPLIES

- Please indicate whether equipment will be provided, including any PPE (masks, gloves, disinfectant) and how that equipment will be distributed and collected (non-contact measures, sanitation), suggest volunteers to provide their own.
- Encourage volunteers to bring their own food and water.
- If you provide food, make sure the food is for a single serving and that the water bottles or containers are cleaned.
- Have hand sanitizer available for all the participants

CHECK- IN

- Do not accept any walk-in registrations.
- When distributing materials, provide a noncontact distribution as much as possible to protect volunteers and site leaders, including distribution bins or buckets.
- If you provide gloves, disposable is recommended.
- If reusable gloves are provided, ask the volunteers to make a donation to your Club for the reusable gloves and they can keep them for future projects.
- Provide Face masks for site leaders and volunteers and keep six feet apart whenever possible.

River Clean Up Guidelines

DURING CLEAN UP

- If multiple groups of volunteers are participating at the same time, ask them to keep local social distance guidelines.
- Require gloves and other personal protective equipment to be always worn when handling debris.

POST CLEAN UP:

- If volunteers are returning equipment, provide alternate containers / buckets to help keep used equipment separate from any unused equipment until it has been properly disinfected and cleaned.
- All disposable equipment (i.e. single-use gloves and masks) must be disposed properly and safely.
- Provide hand sanitizer for volunteers after the clean up.
- Make sure all collected debris is properly secured, minimizing contact with included items.
- Do not touch the face or clothing after handling the collected debris until the hands have been washed or disinfected.
- We recommend that you use your best judgment.
- If you choose to participate on a clean up, we recommend that you follow local ordinances along with CDC health and safety guidelines.

STEP 1: ORGANIZE THE RIVER CLEANUP

- Choose a site:
 - First, find an area where there is a great need to clean
 - Second, walk at least a stretch of the area to see how accessible it is for a group cleanup effort.
 - Tips for choosing a site can be found in the Helpful Tips section of this guide.
 - If you need help finding a cleanup site, contact a local watershed association.
- Choose a day and time. We suggest:
September 25-26, 2021 - WORLD RIVERS DAY
- Saturdays and Sundays are usually the best for cleaning rivers.
- Select the date at least 2 months in advance so you have time to prepare and hire.
- The length of the cleanup is up to you: a few hours, half a day, or an all-day event with lunch, but more importantly, **HAVE FUN!**
- If you choose an all-day event, ask a local radio, television, or newspaper to cover the event.
- Ask a local restaurant or grocery store to sponsor you by donating lunches and snacks for participants.
- Ask your Rotary club members to sponsor and promote their businesses by sponsoring the event.
- Obtain the necessary permits, from the land manager
- Public or private land and local government for cleaning.

River Clean Up Guidelines

- Ask if the government or local agency would like to help sponsor the event by providing trash bags or disposal.
- Organize garbage disposal and recycling
- Start with your local waste management company:
 - Tell them about your project and explain that it is a volunteer community service effort.
 - Ask them if they want to sponsor the effort by removing the trash for free or at a discount.
 - Ask about proper disposal of hazardous / special materials.
 - Know the location of the nearest landfill and recycling center.
 - Make sure your drivers understand the time commitment to get rid of everything properly.
- Maintain proper distance (follow local COVID prevention guidelines)

STEP 2: RECRUIT

- Again, follow your local Covid prevention guidelines.
- You want to recruit lots of volunteers for your cleanup, but you may need to make teams of four, depending on your community regulations.
- The more people you have, the greater your impact!
- To recruit, consider:
 - Members of your Rotary club, your friends, families, neighbors, co-workers, community groups, local scout troops and environmental organizations, schools, universities, firefighters, police departments, National Guard, paramedics, etc., invite different organizations to participate.
- Communicate with suppliers to publish your event in their store
- Ask canoe / kayak clubs to distribute brochures to their members.
- Recruit boat owners to join your team and collect trash in the depths of the river.

STEP 3: PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

- Promote cleanliness in your community. It could inspire others to join or start a project of their own!
- Promote it online through your club pages (website, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- In your local public announcement media Radio, newspapers, TV, look for a free promotion of the event, avoid creating more garbage
- Get news coverage of your event - Call or email local journalists ahead of time and tell them about the cleanup and invite them to interview volunteers and share their cleanup experience.
- **Involve a local VIP: Invite your district governor, invite the other clubs (Rotary, Rotaract, Interact) in your city, region, the district and the zone to join forces, invite the local mayor, your civic representatives in Congress, or other celebrities who might**

River Clean Up Guidelines

attract a crowd. Ask them to show up, or even join in on your clean up; it is good publicity for them and for you.

- Be sure to emphasize specific time with your schedulers and provide any details they need.

STEP 4: CLEAN UP DAY!

- Check the water levels to make sure it's still safe for volunteers!
- Look at the weather of the day. If heavy rain or severe weather is forecast, you should postpone cleaning.
- Fully charge your cell phone before you leave home!
- Volunteers, reporters, personalities, and vendors may need to communicate with you during the day.
- Prepare comments to kick off the event and to end the day.

SET UP!

- Please arrive at least an hour before the scheduled start time and bring a few friends to help with setup.
- Post directional signs for the event so participants can easily locate it.
- Verify that the area is safe and that there is no danger.
- Find a safe place for people who will help from boarding and boarding.
- Set up a registration station, with media and volunteer sign-in sheets.
- Make sure each participant signs a Risk Acknowledgment Statement at check-in (use a disclaimer form approved by your local community or country).
- And as a precaution, it is also worth collecting the cell phone numbers of the participants.
- Follow all privacy laws set by your local government.
- Establish a base of operations, close to your billing area, with:
 - Water and other soft drinks
 - Additional pairs of heavy duty work gloves, in various sizes
 - First aid and safety, if there are paramedics on duty, make sure everyone knows how to contact them.
 - Trash bags and cleaning supplies.
 - Rowing life jackets required, and perhaps additional, for boaters
 - Flyers, fact sheets, river "health" status and any other information relevant to your effort
- If you are collecting trash and recyclables, make sure each volunteer has a bag for each. This will save you time at the end of the day.
- If you are using a commercial garbage collector or catering, please call ahead to confirm that they will be there on time.

River Clean Up Guidelines

START YOUR CLEANING!

- Provide brief comments to get your event off to a good start.
- Acknowledge and thank the VIPs present and give them the opportunity to say a few words.
- Greet and thank the VIPs when they arrive and introduce them to the cleanup leaders and volunteers.
- Make sure you know when they are scheduled to leave so you can properly say goodbye to them.
- Talk about the importance of the river and helping the environment.
- Emphasize safety!
- Describe what people should not pick up (leaking batteries, chemical containers, sharp items such as needles, knives, or firearms). If people come across these items, they should notify a cleaning supervisor or the police.
- Review the schedule of the day
- Identify cleaning supervisors and provide their cell phone numbers for quick access
- Make sure everyone has a map of the area and knows where to focus

STEP 5: FINISH

- At the end of the cleaning, be sure to:
- Separate all waste from recycling (steel, aluminum, plastics, glass, etc.). Pay attention to materials that may need special disposal.
- Organize identified or volunteer commercial waste disposal service with vans to transport all materials.
- All your volunteers check. Use the same sheet that you used for check-in.

STEP 6: CELEBRATE AND GIVE THANKS!

- Celebrate!
- When your cleaning is done, it's time to celebrate! Have a picnic, cookout, or lunch for the volunteers, or if you're too tired and dirty, invite people to a celebratory event another day!
- Say thanks, recognize everyone's efforts as an example, send everyone an electronic certificate of appreciation, use your imagination on how to thank and recognize the volunteers but make sure we incur an extra expense for that
- Follow up with volunteers after the event to say thank you again for making the cleanup a success.
- If civic leaders, VIPs, or reporters attended, please send a formal thank you note with photos of your event and statistics on your cleanup. This is a great gesture that could be helpful to get them involved in future events.
- This can also be useful to start a debate on political action in the protection of rivers and streams!

River Clean Up Guidelines

STEP 7: INSPIRE AND TO EMPOWER OTHERS TO KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

HELPFUL TIPS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

- Things to keep in mind when choosing a site:
- Security First! Look for areas that are away from busy roads without steep banks, waterfalls, dams, mossy rocks, etc.
- Be sensitive to the ecosystem. Smaller streams can be damaged by heavy foot traffic from a group cleanup. Also, be aware of nearby protected areas.
- Make parking easier. Be sure to explore possible parking areas for participants.
- Find a central meeting place. You will need an area where you can establish a "home base" for check-in, supplies, etc.
- Make cleaning fun! **BUT SAFETY COMES FIRST!**
- Know the limits of your group.
- Be it age, skill, or level of comfort with the tasks at hand; don't ask your volunteers to do more than they can.
- Inform parents and guardians that they are responsible for the supervision of their children. Do your best to ensure that each child has adult supervision.
- Proper clothing
- Insist that volunteers wear work gloves. Even benign trash can be the foster home for an insect, snake, or other creature that bites or stings.
- Dress for the weather and homework. Long sleeves and pants help protect skin from poisonous plants, insect bites, and sunburn. Even in hot weather, it is strongly recommended to wear light long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Encourage participants to wear hats and work boots (preferably waterproof) or wellies.
- Slippers and sandals are not recommended.
- Check the weather, know your river level and what the level means
- If heavy rain is forecast, you should postpone it. Rivers, and especially smaller streams, can rise quickly during heavy rains.
- If the water levels are above average, do not attempt to clean, postpone until the water levels are safe.
- Set the end time long before dark
- Allow extra time to wrap up the event so that it concludes before dark.
- Identify and be aware of outdoor hazards:
- Snakes, insects, poison ivy, poison oak, other wild animals, etc.
- Extreme weather (hot, cold, sun, wind).
- Know where the closest medical facilities are.
- Use common sense:
- If it sounds, looks or smells dangerous, it could be. Do not touch it and notify a cleaning supervisor. Remember, no one must pick up anything they don't want. Sharp items such as needles or glass can be placed in an empty detergent bottle and disposed of with your regular trash.

River Clean Up Guidelines

SAFETY TOOLS FOR CLEANING

- First aid box
 - You should always have a standard first aid kit on hand for any cleanup event. For larger cleanings, consider bringing multiple kits, as your group could be spread out.
 - Check to see if anyone in your group has first aid / CPR training or is a medical professional.
 - Protective equipment
 - Protect your group from dangers by encouraging everyone to use:
 - Work gloves
 - Hard Sole Work Boots
 - Personal flotation device (life jacket), if in a boat
 - Sunscreen
 - Insect repellent
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Everyone should bring a bottle of water and some snacks to keep up energy.
- In water
- If the people in your group are sailing, follow these basic rules to help the trip go smoothly and safely:
 - ALWAYS WEAR YOUR life jacket
 - Designate a "lead" boat (front) and a "sweep" boat (rear)
 - Ask people to stay behind the leader and in front of the sweep. The leader and the sweep should be more experienced navigators, and both should be equipped with first aid kits.
 - Do not dive or jump into the water, do not deliberately capsize the boat, etc.
 - Stay in sight of each other - If you can't see the last ship in the group, stop until you can.
 - Designate someone to make decisions in the event of an emergency, as consensus decisions do not always work in emergency situations.

IDENTIFY AND AVOID HAZARDS:

- Watch for filters (trees and accumulations of debris in the water).
- Also keep an eye out for trickier falls, dams, and other river features. Rivers are dynamic! Features may have changed since you first explored the river when planning the cleanup.
- Have an emergency plan - Prepare a tip sheet with emergency phone numbers and evacuation routes.
- Stay away from fishermen, swimmers, and other boaters.
- Avoid hazardous materials
- If you or another cleaning supervisor has been alerted to any hazardous materials, contact your state Department of Environmental Management, Pollution Control, or similar agency IMMEDIATELY.

River Clean Up Guidelines

- Drums or containers may contain toxic waste.
- Needles and other biohazard wastes are dangerous.
- Handle these items with caution: broken glass, aerosol cans, gas cans, and other containers with chemical residue or traces of volatile materials.
- Never handle live ammunition or explosives found; notify authorities immediately if these items are discovered during cleanup.
- Wear all safety equipment if you handle hazardous materials such as glass and metal containers.