

# “IT’S IN THE BAG” CLEANUP SAFETY TIPS



Did you know that 80 percent of the trash in the ocean has come from our lands and waters? Yes it’s that trash you see in parking lots, on the roadside and in our rivers. We can make a difference. Let’s join the tens of millions of people around the world who know that picking up trash is the fun, easy and popular way to make a difference for future generations. And let’s take steps to keep it safe.

## KNOW YOUR TRASH AND YOUR TERRITORY

You can have fun and create safe cleanups by knowing your territory and its risks. You can also give a safety speech and then have volunteers sign a release form confirming that they know the risks and how to stay safe. Start with a map of your territory and make a safety survey of the cleanup area before your volunteers get to work. Walk, drive, bike or boat your territory looking for the trash and potential safety hazards. Note the trash and any potential hazards on your map and make sure to alert your volunteers. Rule number one: If you don’t feel safe, don’t pick it up!



Most of us will be picking up plastic bags, straws, Styrofoam cups, take out containers, cigarette butts and plastic bottles. These are generally safe if not a bit icky sticky. Knock the ants out before you put the trash in in your bag!

Watch out for **SHARP** trash. Sharps can be broken bottles, bits of metal and sometimes even needles. If you have sharps, you need containers such as empty detergent bottles or buckets for collection.

Watch out for **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** such as batteries, gas cans or ammunition. Mark the location of these items on a map and call out to your local public works department for assistance.

**LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.** Watch out for areas with high traffic, steep slopes, wooded areas and stream banks. These need cleaning too, but your volunteers need to know the risk of traffic, falling, spiders and snakes.

## GEAR UP!

You may want to have these tools available or recommend them to your volunteers. These are the basics: work or garden gloves, sharps container and your cleanup bags. Not essential but cool is a grabbing stick.



Got more questions?

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