



Community clean up challenge

Why not undertake a clean up with your youth club and enhance your local environment for future generations. Carrying out a litter pick is one way to do this, it is a great thing to do because...

- You are helping to remove litter from the environment, a lot of the litter we see contains plastic, which won't degrade, it just breaks up into smaller pieces, making it harder to remove.
- Litter can easily reach rivers by being carried over land or through storm drains. Rivers carry litter to the ocean, so even litter dropped inland could reach the ocean and harm marine life. Wherever you carry out your litter pick you are helping prevent plastic accumulating in our oceans.
- You are making your local environment more attractive for yourself and others to enjoy and you could inspire others to do the same
- Taking part in litter picks or seeing the litter others pick up, can inspire people to change their behaviour to prevent litter entering the environment in the first place. Behaviour changes could include reducing the use of single use plastics and making sure to dispose of waste responsibly.
- It is a great way to explore and enjoy your local environment, whilst making a positive difference and enhancing your own wellbeing.
- Collecting data from litter picks can provide information about the most common types of litter, and where there are local litter hotspots. This can help target actions to prevent litter entering the environment. In 2020 the [Marine Conservation Society](#) found the 3 most common large litter items collected from beach cleans were plastic lids, wet wipes and cigarette stubs. Cigarette stubs and wet wipes can contain plastic



Before the event: Checklist

- Identify the area you would like to clean up. This could be anywhere you have identified which has litter, such as your local green space, park, playing fields, carpark, or a beach.
- If you are the organiser of a group litter pick, visit the site in advance and carry out a risk assessment so you can produce health and safety guidelines for participants. We have an example risk assessment and health and safety guidance for you to use and adapt at the end of this guidance
- Encourage as many club members to join in as possible. Please ensure you follow the latest UK Government coronavirus guidelines for your area.
- Contact your local council, who may be able to provide some equipment.
- If carrying out a litter pick in a small group, you can plan to take your litter home to sort and dispose of it according to local recycling guidelines.
- If you plan on collecting a large amount of litter you may want to contact your local council to see if they will collect it and agree a collection location.



During the event: Checklist

- Make sure everyone has read and is happy with the health and safety guidelines. Make and keep a record of everyone who has attended. Group leaders should continuously assess the situation for new or changing risks.
- Now it's time to start your litter pick! Here are some extra challenges you can try with your club. Tweet a photo of specific items on twitter using the hashtag [#preventingplasticpollution](#)
Who will find the most unusual item?
Who will find the oldest piece of food packaging? (check the best before date)
- Influence others by posting pictures of what you collect on twitter using the hashtag [#preventingplasticpollution](#), you could photograph all your filled bags, or spread everything out on a sheet so we can see what you found
- Inform the council that the litter is ready to be collected (if previously arranged).
- Remember to separate the litter you collect into recyclables and non-recyclables according to your local recycling guidelines. The [recycle now website](#) can help you find out what you can recycle where you live.
- Ask attendees to answer some [quick survey questions](#) to find out how taking part in the event has made them think.
- **Group leaders: Please fill in this [survey on our Preventing Plastic Pollution Project website](#), let us know how much litter you collected and how many people took part on page 1 of the survey, this will help us see the impact of everyone's efforts. You could go even further and sort your litter into different categories using the form at the end of this guide, then complete page 2 of the online survey.**
- Submitting your findings through this online form will help researchers understand more about the sources and movement of litter through your local environment, so we can do more to support communities to reduce it.



After the Event: Checklist

- Keep going, you could make doing a litter pick a regular thing . Does litter in your local area increase or decrease over time? Keep reporting your results to the survey
- Check out some of our other resources to help you prevent plastic pollution resources

Visit [Countryside Classroom](#) and search for plastics to see more of our Preventing Plastic Pollution resources.

For more resources from the Preventing Plastic Pollution project visit the [project website](#)



Litter pick health and safety guidelines for participants page 1

Health and safety guidelines

Whilst undertaking your litter picks, you do so at your own risk. Do not undertake any activity you believe to be unsafe. The Environment Agency does not provide any public liability insurance. Please make sure you or your organisation have appropriate insurance where necessary.

General guidance

- Always follow the most up to date COVID 19 guidance for your area
- Wash your hands after completing your litter pick
- Ensure at least one other person is always present
- When carrying litter sacks, only fill the sacks with as much litter as you can comfortably lift
- If children are involved, make sure there is sufficient adult supervision and that the children are aware of which items are not safe to pick up

What to wear and take with you

- Always wear appropriate sturdy footwear
- Cover any cuts with surgical tape and/or a waterproof plaster.
- Wear gloves and ideally use a litter picker



Litter pick health and safety guidelines for participants page 2

- Wear clothing appropriate to the weather conditions
- In the sun cover up your skin, wear a sun hat and sunglasses, apply sunscreen when necessary
- Always carry a drink of water and take frequent breaks to avoid heat stress
- In cold or wet weather, wear warm clothing and waterproofs if necessary

Hazards to look out for

- Be aware of environmental hazards e.g. electric fences, steep drops, uneven surfaces
- Take care near water. Do not go within 2 metres of a river, lake or the sea
- Take care near roads, use pavements or designated footpaths
- Check if fields contain livestock before entering. Only enter if safe to do so
- Be aware of the [risk of ticks](#), make sure skin is well covered particularly if walking in long grass. Check yourself for ticks and seek medical attention if required



Litter pick health and safety guidelines for participants page 3

- Avoid causing harm to wildlife. If you are on a protected site, make sure you have permission to be there. Avoid disturbing nesting birds (most common between March and September) and other [protected species](#)
- Avoid transferring invasive [non-native species](#) to or from any location. Make sure clothing and equipment is cleaned before and after each use
- Report fly-tipping or illegal waste dumping to your local council. Use [this webpage](#) to find out who to contact in your local area
- Avoid sharp, heavy or potentially dangerous items, including hazardous or poisonous substances, report these to the **Environment Agency incident hotline 0800 80 70 60**
- Do not pick up discarded needles, report these to your local council and they will dispose of them. For a list of how to report these and other hazards or environmental incidents visit [gov.uk](#)

Litter Pick Risk Assessment

Location: _____ **Date:** _____ **Assessment carried out by** _____

Using the risk assessment

Anyone under the age of 18 taking part in a litter pick must be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult. Please note whilst undertaking litter picks, you do so at your own risk. Always assess the situation to identify and control potential risks. Do not undertake any activity you believe to be unsafe. The Environment Agency does not provide any public liability insurance. Please make sure you or your organisation have appropriate insurance where necessary. Group leaders should complete a site-specific risk assessment prior to each litter pick event. The below risk assessment can be used as a guide.

Litter Pick Risk Assessment

Location: _____ Date: _____ Assessment carried out by _____

Hazard	Risk	Controls	Measures to reduce effect in the result of an accident	Risk level (Low, medium or high)
Broken glass, sharp/rusty edges	Cuts & infections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong gloves to be worn at all times. 2. Use litter grabbers to pick up sharp items, if safe to do so. 3. All participants should have up to date tetanus protection. 4. Make sure there is a first aid kit with the group. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek medical attention where appropriate. 2. Thoroughly wash any cuts or abrasions as soon as possible, however minor. 3. Cover any cuts or breaks in the skin 	
Needles	Cuts & infections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not touch and report to event organiser to make others aware 2. The organiser to report to council for removal. Use this webpage to report https://www.gov.uk/report-syringes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek immediate medical attention if contact with needle occurs. 	
Heavy/awkward to handle rubbish	Pulled muscles & strains	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extreme care to be taken, use good lifting practices and share the load with an appropriate number of people. 2. If too heavy to handle leave the object in place and report it to the organiser to arrange removal by the council. 3. Report any fly-tipping or illegal waste dumping to your local council. Use this webpage to find out who to contact for your local area https://www.gov.uk/report-flytipping 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stop immediately if suffering any pain or discomfort. 2. Seek medical attention if the ill effects persist. 	

Litter Pick Risk Assessment

Location: _____ Date: _____ Assessment carried out by _____

		4. Only fill litter bag with as much litter as you can comfortably carry. Continually assess the weight of the bag to ensure it is manageable.		
Batteries, asbestos, ordnance & miscellaneous chemicals	Potentially dangerous depending on condition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not approach or remove any potentially hazardous waste. Don't open sealed containers or bags. 2. Report to the council for disposal. Use this webpage to report https://www.gov.uk/report-an-environmental-incident. 	1. Seek medical attention if exposed to pesticides, insecticides or other unknown or potentially hazardous chemicals – record any label details.	
Ground conditions	Sprains, muscle damage & broken bones	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoid dangerous areas and choose the safest possible route over difficult ground. 2. Instruct volunteers to wear suitable footwear. 3. Ensure there is a first aid kit with every group. 4. Make sure you know your accurate location and the most suitable road access points. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thoroughly wash any cuts or abrasions as soon as possible, however minor. 2. Seek medical attention for any serious cuts, bruises or strains. 	
Highways vehicles, bicycles, plant and machinery	Collision with moving traffic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoid proximity to traffic if possible. 2. Stay off the highway. 3. Be alert to the potential presence of agricultural machinery. 4. Wear high visibility clothing if necessary. 5. Do not work on the roadside if the speed limit is 30mph or over. 6. Be aware of the vehicles around you during the litter pick. 7. Keep a look out. 8. Children should not work by a roadside. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek medical attention in the event of injury. 2. Make sure you know your accurate position at all times in case of emergency. 	

Litter Pick Risk Assessment

Location: _____ Date: _____ Assessment carried out by _____

Lone working	Being unable to get help if needed	1. Do not work out of sight of others in the group. Always work in at least pairs		
Other people	Physical or verbal assault	1. Make sure you have the necessary permission to carry out a litter pick at your chosen site, notify landowners where necessary. 2. Be aware of aggressive and difficult people. 3. Withdraw rather than face conflict. 4. Organiser/section leader to have mobile phone. 5. Keep together and stay off private property. 6. Children or any vulnerable people should never be left to work alone. Ensure that they stay with their parents/guardians/carers.	1. Seek medical attention following any assault / injury.	
Animals – Domestic, wild & farm	Bites/scratches injury from animals	1. Make sure you always have permission from landowners to be on the land. 2. Make sure all attendees are aware of any animals likely to be present on site and that you behave responsibly e.g. keeping gates shut. 2. Beware of loose dogs. 3. Avoid contact with animals. 4. Avoid contact with animal faeces.	1. Seek medical attention as soon as possible after being bitten or scratched. 2. Wash hands immediately after contact with faeces. 3. Avoid touching eyes or mouth.	
Biological Hazards	Ticks Flea bites	1. All Skin to be completely covered. 2. Make sure people are aware of the risks of Lymes disease from ticks and when to seek medical advice. See NHS link for	1. Seek medical attention if at all concerned.	

Litter Pick Risk Assessment

Location: _____ Date: _____ Assessment carried out by _____

		<p>advise https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/.</p> <p>3. All participants advised to check themselves for ticks after an event.</p>		
Waterside diseases	Weil's disease can be caught from contaminated soil or fresh water or direct from infectious animals	<p>1. Wear gloves.</p> <p>2. Do not touch dead animals.</p> <p>3. Cover any cuts or sores with a waterproof plaster before carrying out a litter pick.</p> <p>4. Avoid getting hands wet in rivers, ponds or canals.</p> <p>5. Wash hands thoroughly after the event and before eating.</p> <p>6. Make sure all participants are aware of the risks. See NHS link for details https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/leptospirosis/.</p>	<p>1. Seek medical attention where appropriate.</p> <p>2. Thoroughly wash any cuts or abrasions as soon as possible, however minor.</p>	
Dog faeces	<i>Toxocara canis</i>	<p>1. Do not touch dog faeces.</p>	<p>1. Thoroughly wash your hands if you know you have touched dog faeces. Always wash your hands after a litter pick.</p> <p>2. Thoroughly wash any cuts or abrasions as soon as possible, however minor.</p> <p>3. Seek medical attention where appropriate.</p>	
Weather, e.g. Thunder storms	Various risks to health	<p>1. Cease work in inappropriate conditions.</p> <p>2. Dress for conditions & carry additional clothing.</p> <p>3. Where necessary use sun protection.</p>	<p>1. Seek medical attention where appropriate.</p>	

Litter Pick Risk Assessment

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		4. In the event of extreme weather conditions the litter pick should be postponed or abandoned.		
Cliffs and, steep slopes	Falls leading to sprains, muscle damage & broken bones	1. Avoid litter picking on or close to the edge of steep slopes, cliffs etc and below unstable riverbanks & slopes. 3. Take weather conditions and possible weather changes into account. 4. Seek medical treatment in the event of injury. 5. Always wear appropriate sturdy footwear.	1. Seek medical attention where appropriate.	
Electric fences	Electrocution	1. Always assume electric fences are live. 2. Warn volunteers not to touch electric fences, make sure everyone is aware of where they are.	1. Seek medical attention where appropriate.	
Water, marshes, bogs	Hypothermia, drowning	1. Avoid banks, especially if they appear unstable. 2. Always work in pairs if close to water. 3. Always stay at least two meters from any lake or river edge. 4. Shower and change into warm dry clothing if immersed. 5. Never allow children to work in these areas. 6. Adults should be cautious & non-swimmers must not litter pick near water.	1. Seek medical attention where appropriate.	
Hedges, fences, walls, ditches	Falls leading to sprains, muscle damage & broken bones	1. Take care when climbing stiles particularly in wet weather. 2. Avoid climbing walls, ditches and fences. 3. Stay within the nominated location.	1. Obtain medical attention in the event of injury.	

Litter Pick Risk Assessment

Location: _____ Date: _____ Assessment carried out by _____

Tools, equipment	Accidents leading to cuts, broken flesh, broken bones and other injuries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Team to be shown how to use all equipment 2. Have first aid kit available. 3. Volunteers must use only the equipment provided and as instructed. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain medical attention in the event of injury. 	
Trees, shrubs	Trips, cuts & eye pokes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be alert to the risks and keep a look out for hazards. 2. Be aware of low hanging branches and exposed tree and shrub roots. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain medical attention in the event of injury. 	
Bites, stings, Irritants, dangerous plants	Poisoning, skin irritations or allergic reactions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wear the gloves provided. 2. Beware of dangerous plants and possible adverse reactions e.g. giant hogweed, stinging nettles, brambles 3. Wash hands thoroughly after the event. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek medical attention for unusual or suspicious symptoms after contact with vegetation or irritants. 	
Risks to wildlife and the Environment	Risk posed by volunteers to wildlife and the environment e.g. through disturbance or spreading invasive species or disease	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoid areas where you risk disturbing nesting birds or other protected species e.g. water crowfoot, depressed river mussel, otters, native white-clawed crayfish, water voles, bats, badgers. 2. Clean all equipment after leaving each area to minimise risk of contamination. Be aware of common invasive species e.g. water primrose, floating pennywort, giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, parrot's feather. 		
Young and vulnerable people and safeguarding	Getting lost and being in danger and vulnerable	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children must be with their responsible adult. 2. Vulnerable people must be with their responsible adult. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek medical attention where appropriate. 	

Litter Pick Risk Assessment

Location: _____ Date: _____ Assessment carried out by _____

		3. Organisations safeguarding procedures must be shared and followed if applicable.		
Dynamic risk assessment	Site specific risks proximity to shooting range or river in flood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out and onsite evaluation to check for any hazards not dealt with, and any changes to conditions. . 2. Some sites may need to be avoided completely at certain times e.g. during shooting on a firing range. 	1. Seek medical attention in the event of injury.	
Coronavirus	Spread of coronavirus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow the latest government guidelines on coronavirus. 2. Follow your organisation's coronavirus policies. 	1. Follow the latest government's rules if you have coronavirus symptoms.	



Location: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Time: ____ : ____

Number of rubbish bags collected: _____

Weight of rubbish bags collected: _____ kg

Plastic & polystyrene	Total
Food & drink related	
Drinks bottles	
Caps & lids (if separated)	
Packets & wrappers	
Food / takeaway containers	
Cups	
Cutlery, trays & stirrers	
Straws	
4/6 pack can rings	
Bags	
Shopping / carrier bags	
Other bags	
Household & recreation	
Bottles & containers (cleaner, cosmetics)	
Toys, dummies & party accessories	
Sanitary & medical	
Wet wipes	
Period products	
Cotton bud sticks	
Face masks	
Smoking & vaping	
Cigarette stubs	
Lighters & cigarette / tobacco packaging	
E-cigarettes & vaping products	
Miscellaneous	
Bottles & containers (drums, jerry cans)	
Industrial packaging, sheeting and films	
Agriculture related (incl. feed bags)	
Fishing line & lures	
Fishing net	
String, cord & rope	
Unidentifiable plastic / polystyrene pieces	

Rubber	Total
Gloves (washing up or disposable)	
Balloons (incl. string, valves, ribbons)	
Tyres & engine belts	
Paper & cardboard	
Cardboard boxes	
Food packaging, paper straws & trays	
Cartons (tetrapak & purepak)	
Cups (incl. coffee cups)	
Bags	
Newspapers & magazines	
Cigarette packets & papers	
Wood	
Cutlery, stirrers & lolly sticks	
Pallets & crates	
Metal	
Drinks cans	
Food cans	
Caps & lids (if separated)	
Aerosol / spray cans	
Foil wrappers	
Disposable BBQs	
Fishing weights, hooks & lures	
Glass, ceramics & fabric	
Glass bottles & containers	
Glass fragments	
Pottery & ceramics	
Clothing & fabrics	
Other	
Pollutants (wax, oil, grease)	
Bagged dog faeces ()	
Bagged rubbish (bin bag)	
Bagged rubbish (shopping bag)	

Found something that isn't on the list? Please add it on the next page

