

Guide to Hosting a Clean-up Event

As a Site Captain or Cleanup Host, you are responsible for organizing and facilitating the activities that occur at a specific cleanup site on the day of your event.

You will be managing your own individual cleanup site/event with some logistical and programmatic support from us.

Site Captains are responsible for helping to recruit volunteers, managing supplies, providing safety briefing, educating volunteers and reinforcing the key messages about marine debris and single-use plastics, and executing the event on the day-of.

Planning your cleanup

- Choose your location. Get in touch if you need suggestions!
- We prefer inland locations on Biscayne Bay or other areas where there are mangroves, riprap or rocky shorelines where debris get trapped. Many beaches are actually well maintained by county sanitation workers.
- Some locations require permissions or event permits from the local authorities. We can advise.
- If you are doing an intracoastal or inland site on the bay, consult the tide-charts to decide a time for your event. It's best to aim for low tide, as you will have the best opportunity to access the shoreline and collect the most marine debris. If low tide isn't feasible, allow a 2-3 hour window outside of HIGH tide. Beach cleanups are not impacted by tides.
- Visit your chosen site before the cleanup and assess it so that you can become familiar, know where to set up the registration table, how many people it can accommodate, and whether the site has on-site recycling bins, or on-site water fountain.

2-3 Weeks Before the Cleanup (Promoting your Cleanup)

If your event is open to the public and you wish to recruit volunteers (see separate document for instructions), post your event to our website VolunteerCleanup.org

- Use the unique URL that it generates to recruit volunteers. Send the link via email or post to social media sites. For FB events, you can put our URL in the "tickets" field and remind volunteers that they should sign up online so that you can be prepared for estimated turnout with enough supplies.
- Your event will also be listed amongst all cleanup events on our website and searchable by zip code.
- Each Monday at 12 noon, an email blast goes out to all registered 3000+ volunteers in our database, notifying them of cleanups within a 15-mile radius. For best turnout, we recommend listing your event at least 3 Mondays before your event so it appears in several Monday morning email blasts prior to your event.

- Volunteers can then RSVP by clicking on the cleanup site they would like to attend.
- The cleanup event will be linked to the Site Captain's email address and the Site Captain will receive all the registrations via email.
- It's useful to set a maximum # of volunteers if your space is smaller

Supplies checklist

What supplies you provide vs. ask your volunteers to bring is entirely up to you. We recommend the following supplies to either be provided by you or your volunteers,

- Reusable dish or working/garden gloves (approx. \$2 per pair at Publix) We really like these that are only \$.50-\$1.00/pair at Home Depot and easily machine washable
 - <https://www.homedepot.com/p/Ansell-HyFlex-Nitrile-Gloves-24-Pack-AHP1150010/206322532>
 - <https://www.homedepot.com/p/Firm-Grip-Nitrile-Coated-Gloves-10-Pack-5510-16/203423243>
 - <https://www.homedepot.com/p/Firm-Grip-Nitrile-Dip-Gloves-5-Per-Pack-5558/205644545>
- **Garbage Bags** and/or buckets (bags can blow in the wind and be difficult to manage) We oftentimes use buckets for collecting and then consolidate them into bags when full
- We love to use CLEAR garbage bags that show the trash in the photos!
- **Buckets:** Some volunteers find it convenient to use a bucket while doing a cleanup. You can get buckets from many local restaurants. Try asking a Chinese restaurant, fast food burger place or Dunkin donuts as they get their soy sauce, pickles and dough delivered in 5-gallon buckets and are usually happy to give them away to volunteers ☺
- **Water Cooler for water refills** – reduce the need for single-use disposable plastic bottled water, where possible. 2-gallon water cooler is \$10 at Target or Home Depot, and has enough water for 20-30 ppl to REFILL their own bottles
- **Hand-sanitizer**
- **Basic First Aid Kit** for cuts, scrapes (alcohol/cleaning swabs, Band-Aids, antibiotic ointment and
- **Luggage or fishing Weight Scale** for weighing garbage bags. Otherwise you can estimate 10 lbs per bag, if 13-gallon kitchen size bag
- Download the Ocean Conservancy's **CleanSwell app** for more detailed data gathering to log, tally and measure the impact of your cleanup. With Clean Swell, the data you collect will upload to Ocean Conservancy's global ocean trash database in real time. Participants can earn badges for their efforts as they remove more and more trash and then share their Cleanup results right from the app with friends via Facebook, Twitter, and email. You can also use a group ID to track your collective impact
- **Community service forms:** We have a template you can print that is pre-signed by us. Just ask! We can only give community service hours electronically after the fact if the volunteer emails us a picture of them at the cleanup.

You can download the app here:

iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/clean-swell/id985692119?mt=8>

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.oceanconservancy.cleanswell>

2-Days before your event: Send a reminder email

Site Captains should email volunteers that have registered for their cleanup a few days before the event reminding them of their RSVP and notifying them of anything else you think that they should know (where to meet, what to bring, etc.) sending them the waivers in advance and asking them to print, sign and bring with. You can download your RSVP list with volunteer names and emails by logging to VolunteerCleanup.org and visiting the URL for your cleanup event page.

Day of the Cleanup

Site Captains will bring the supplies to their cleanup site, set up to collect waivers, distribute material, and assign volunteer tasks.

CHECKLIST OF RESPONSIBILITIES ON DAY OF CLEANUP EVENT

1. Welcome and thank volunteers for coming out and helping make our waterways cleaner.
2. Have volunteers sign waivers as they arrive
3. Give the Safety Briefing (below)
4. After safety briefing, you can distribute gloves and bags
 - a. For international coastal cleanup, work in teams of 3—one person with glove, one person with garbage bag and one person with the data card or clean swell app
5. If you are running low on gloves, give 1 glove per person for the hand they pick up trash
6. Do not distribute supplies and UNTIL the waiver has been collected.
7. Assign volunteers their tasks
8. Set a pre-determined time for everyone to meet back up for group photo
9. Lead a post clean up discussion
10. Tally the bags (# of bags and weight)
11. Take a group photo and share on social media
12. Remind volunteers to sign up for weekly notifications of local cleanup events at VolunteerCleanup.org
13. For International Coastal Cleanup, do not distribute the gift bags and party passes until the volunteers return their supplies and datacards.

******Safety Briefing: You must brief volunteers on safety precautions, explaining potential hazards and how to avoid them, as well as reminding them that they are responsible for their actions and assume all liability. Please communicate the following points.**

- Volunteers are participating at their own risk, and assume all liability
- Volunteers are responsible for their own actions
- We want volunteers to be safe and have an enjoyable volunteer experience and to do they need to use common sense.
- Be advised that there may be sharp objects including rocks, glass and sometimes hypodermic needles.
- Do not climb on or over rocky shorelines while carrying something in your hands (bucket, bag or pickers) Should you lose your balance you will need to hands to break your fall. If you have something in your hands, we don't want you to break your fall on your head!!
- Always LOOK before picking up
- Do not touch a needle! If needles are found by volunteers, they may contact the host. If the host desires, a best practice is to carefully pick up the needle and put it INSIDE a water bottle and put the cap back on to prevent harm to anyone else and throw the bottle away.
- Do not put a loose needle/syringe inside a garbage bag where it could poke out and hurt someone.
- Similarly, Do not put any kind of large sharp or rusty object inside a garbage bag where it could poke out and cut someone carrying that bag.
- Volunteers should be aware of branches in mangrove areas as those are the most common minor injuries—scrapes from wood branches.
- Volunteers should not touch anything that makes them uncomfortable. Focus on easy recognizable plastic. Leave natural debris, dead animals etc.

Introductory Remarks

- Miami has a significant Marine Debris problem.
- On International Coastal Cleanup Day alone, in Miami-Dade 2,400 volunteers removed 15,000 lbs of debris from our coasts
- VolunteerCleanup.org engages volunteers to clean their shorelines as a way to raise awareness about marine debris and encourage people to reduce their reliance on single use plastics.
- Today you will have a chance to experience the severity of the problem and discuss what we can all do about it

Process/Best Practices

- Take BEFORE pictures—always good to demonstrate what the shoreline looked like before volunteers arrived
- If you are running low on gloves, give 1 glove per person for the hand they pick up trash
- Pick a central starting point
- Send half volunteers to the left and half volunteers to the right of the meeting point
- For separating recycling, (if you choose to do this and have a place to take the recycling) volunteers should focus on obvious “low hanging fruit” recyclables: plastic bottles (like water or soda) aluminum cans, and glass bottles.

- As volunteers are cleaning, they should gently toss recyclable items onto the grass away from the shoreline. Towards the end of the cleanup, send a few volunteers to do a sweep and collect the recyclable items into separate clear garbage bags
- If available, recycling can go into CLEAR garbage bags, so that it's visibly easy to identify that those are recycling items.
- If recycling bins are available onsite, empty the recyclables into the bin WITHOUT the plastic bag, otherwise ask volunteers to take recycling home.
- If you have younger kids, assign them specific tasks like collecting just the bottle caps, or straws, or cigarette butts. Make it like a scavenger hunt for them!
- Set a time for a group photo (usually about 30-20 minutes from end of the cleanup)
- Stage the photo nicely. Arrange the bags in the front so it's easy to see the volume. Volunteers can stand behind the bags. Get the water in the background! Ask a passerby to take a photo
- Hand out VolunteerCleanup.org flyers
- If you run out of community service forms, I can email them one, if they email me at dara@volunteercleanup.org

Post-Cleanup Debrief/Group Discussion

This is incredibly important. We want volunteers to leave with a better understanding of the problem, and takeaways about what they can do:

Questions for Discussion:

- What did you see today?
- What were your reactions to what you saw and experienced today?
- What kinds of items were the most common?
- What was the weirdest thing you found today?
- Where do you think this trash comes from and how did it get onto our shorelines?
- Why is marine debris a problem?
- What changes can we make in our personal lives?

Answers and Talking Points:

- 80% of marine debris is land based. That means it originated on land and found its way into our oceans and waterways. Only 20% comes from boaters or fishing and water based activities. And, it ALL comes from us! We create this pollution and nearly all of it is from food and beverage related items.
- It often begins as street litter, and blows or flows into the storm drains and directly out into the bay and into the ocean – do not litter! Dispose of trash properly.
- The tidal patterns deposit the marine debris onto our shorelines where at low-tide, we have the opportunity to gather it before it flows back out again.
- While the touristy beaches in our community are well maintained, shorelines on the bay that are rocky and have mangroves are especially problematic. Plastic bags, Styrofoam and other forms of marine debris gather, collect and get stuck in the rocks and mangroves and there little support from the cities in cleaning them
- Cigarette Butts are the most commonly littered item in the world

- Contrary to popular belief they are not made of cotton or paper. They are PLASTIC and not biodegradable. If you smoke, or know someone who does, please do not throw your cigarette butts on the street!!!
- Styrofoam is particularly evil! It breaks down into tiny beads that are often mistaken for food by marine life and once it deteriorates it's difficult to remove.
- Marine debris poses a significant risk to marine life. Our beloved sea turtles often mistake floating plastic bags for their food, jellyfish
- At our current rate, in 2050 the oceans will have more plastic than fish!
- Marine debris threatens our tourist and real estate economy
- As a society, we rely too much on single use plastics and items of convenience. If we didn't use so much disposable plastic, we wouldn't have this problem.
- Additionally, our over reliance on single use plastics is contributing to sea level rise. Plastic is made by burning fossil fuels which emits Co2 into our atmosphere, and is a leading cause of climate change

Simple things we can all do:

- Reduce, REFUSE, Reuse
- Recycle
- Bring your own reusable bags to the store
- Carry and refill a reusable water bottle
- Skip the straw when ordering a beverage at a bar or restaurant. Simply tell the server you are working on reducing disposable plastic waste
- Ask restaurants you patronize to phase out Styrofoam in their to-go packaging and switch to more sustainable, environmentally friendly options.

Proposed schedule and activities for 2-hour cleanup

- 15 min, volunteers arrive check in..
- 15 min introduction, safety briefing, explain tasks, distribute supplies
- 1 hour of cleaning up
- Gathering back for group photo at 1 hour 30 minutes into event
- Last 30 minutes; Count and weight the bags, take group photo,
- Haul trash away, sign community service forms, pack up supplies

After the Cleanup

Post photos with # of volunteers, # of bags, and # of lbs collected to

<https://www.facebook.com/volunteercleanup/> tell people to "like" our page and tag themselves on the photo

Instagram @volunteercleanup

For International Coastal Cleanup, use hashtag #MiamiCleanup2016

Contact Information

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns before then, feel free to contact Dara Schoenwald, dara@volunteecleanup.org