

Conducting a Beach Clean-up

Pick a Location

Identify beaches or waterways in your area that could be cleaned and that are safe and accessible. Contact the local parks agency that oversees the cleanup location to make sure you have the necessary permission to be there and determine what to do with the trash and recyclables you collect.

Visit the site in advance of the cleanup date to determine:

- Where to set up a check-in station
- Where to leave bags of trash and recyclables
- What areas volunteers will clean

Contact Your Crew

Encourage friends, family and colleagues to get involved and help you organize your cleanup. Meet up to plan the event and assign roles.

Spread the word by telling everyone about the cleanup through email, social media and e-vites.

Here's a sample Facebook post:

I strongly believe that no matter where we live, the ocean is our life support system. That's why I'm teaming up with Ocean Conservancy to help keep our ocean and waterways clean, and I'd like you to join me! I'm hosting a cleanup at [location] on [date and time]. I hope to see you there!

Get Supplies

Determine what kinds of supplies you will need, such as:

- Work gloves for volunteers (or have your volunteers bring a pair of gloves with them)
- Water cooler with enough water to keep volunteers properly hydrated, especially in warm temperatures (or have your volunteers bring their own)
- First-aid kit for minor cuts and scrapes
- Trash bags (or have your volunteers bring reusable containers, like buckets)
- Sign-in sheet to record the number of participants and enable you to contact them later with thanks and photos
- Pens or pencils

- [Cleanup data forms](#)
- Optional: If you have a fish or a luggage scale (a scale with a hook) at home, you can use it to weigh the trash you collect

Keep These Safety Tips in Mind

Review what to do in case of a health emergency (heat exhaustion or heatstroke, broken bone, etc.) and find out whether any of your volunteers have medical training or know basic first aid.

When visiting the site, look for natural and man-made safety hazards, such as rocky areas, highly variable tides, poisonous plants, high-speed roads, power lines, etc. If necessary, inform your volunteers that they may need to dress accordingly, such as wearing long pants or closed-toed shoes.

Plan ahead for handling sharp items, including syringes or pieces of broken glass. We recommend disposing of these items in a container with a tight screw lid, such as an empty liquid laundry detergent bottle that you have clearly labeled.

Find out how to contact your [local Fish and Wildlife Service office](#) in case you encounter any dead, entangled or injured wildlife. You can report these finds on your data form, but be sure to leave any wildlife handling to the experts.

Set Up

Arrive early to set up, post signs and label your trash drop-off site. At your check-in station, ensure you have writing utensils and sign-in sheets ready for your volunteers.

What to Tell Volunteers

Emphasize the importance of data collection. This information is used to create a snapshot of the global ocean trash problem and influence long-term solutions. Ask volunteers to use tick marks to record debris items; words such as "lots" and "many" are not useful for data analysis.

To make data collection easier, suggest that volunteers work in small teams with each team focused on one data card.

Instruct volunteers on what to do if they encounter any hazardous items, such as sharp objects or dead, entangled or injured animals. Remind them of any local safety hazards, such as power lines or poison ivy.

Establish a point-person to stay at the check-in station in case of health emergencies or any late arrivals.

Tell volunteers what to do with the filled bags of trash, and set a meeting time for the end of the cleanup so that everyone returns at the same time.

Document the Cleanup

Take before and after photos of the cleanup site as well as shots of your volunteers in action and a final group picture with all of the trash collected.

If you have a scale with a hook, use it to weigh the trash collected. If you don't have a scale, you can use a standard conversion of 15 pounds per trash bag to estimate the overall weight of your collected trash.

As the volunteers finish, collect all completed [data forms](#).

Ensure all trash is left in the designated drop-off location and that no materials are left behind as you leave the cleanup location.