



Community Clean Up Planning Guide

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How to use this guide

This “how to” guide is intended for organizers of volunteer beautification projects in the City of Oakland.

This guide will focus on neighborhood litter and graffiti removal events. The guide is organized into three sections (click to go to each section):

[Planning Your Event](#)

[Executing Your Event](#)

[Following Up](#)

Planning Your Event

Choose a Location

Take a look at the public spaces in your neighborhood. Do you see parks that are littered? A creek that drains to the Bay? Trash in the streets? A median strip overrun by trash and weeds? These are all ideal places to stage a cleanup.

A couple of thoughts:

- Choose a place where a local community can benefit from the cleanup, and get them involved in making it happen. Include neighbors, businesses, schools, and community organizations.
- Choose a place that’s safe enough for anyone to work in with proper guidance (i.e. no construction zones, private property, condemned buildings)

Identify Planning Partners

Organizing a neighborhood cleanup alone can be daunting. It becomes much easier (and fun!) if you work with others. Working with others to achieve common goals builds community and helps keep Oakland beautiful. If you don’t have people to work with, consider reaching out to other neighbors, businesses, and community groups who might collaborate on this, and future, projects.

There are several ways you might find these partners:

- Talk to your neighbors (those you know; and those you don't!)
- Talk to local business owners
- Contact local schools
- Contact the leaders of religious organizations
- The City of Oakland Environmental Stewardship Team. They can be reached via email at adoptaspot@oaklandnet.com or at 510-238-7630. They can connect you with any existing Adopt-a-Spot groups in the area. For more information, check out www.oaklandadoptaspot.org.
- Locate the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) in the cleanup area. NCPCs are a group of neighbors in designated areas of the City, or beats, who are committed to improving their community. They may know other people interested in what you want to do. This [map](#) shows all the NCPC beats in Oakland, from 1X to 35Y
- Each NCPC also has a Neighborhood Services Coordinator (NSC), a city official who works with the community volunteers in the NCPC. The NSC can tell you more about the NCPC. Once you've found the right NCPC, you can find out when they [meet](#) and [contact](#) information for the NSC.
- Other nearby community organizations, recreation centers, and non-profits
- Email your [City Council Member](#)
- Send a call-out on a neighborhood listserv or on Nextdoor.com

Having partners doesn't have to mean endless committee meetings. Most of this work can be organized with a few simple emails and phone calls.

Scout out the Site

Before your event, visit your site. Make a list that includes:

- Geographic extent of the area to be cleaned up
- Types and volume of trash
- Areas for volunteers to gather, stage materials, tools, and debris
- List of businesses, houses of worship, schools, etc. in the vicinity
- Take a "before" picture

Make sure you coordinate the event with City Environmental Stewardship staff. Staff will assess safety considerations, logistics, and available support (tools and supplies, debris pickup, city assistance, etc.).

Set the Date and Time

Think about when your likely volunteers can attend, for example:

- During the lunch break of people working nearby
 - A one-hour cleanup can be very focused and productive
 - Consider providing food if possible
- On the weekend in family-focused park
 - Saturday from 9:00 am until noon is popular
 - Sunday afternoons might work well too

Set the date at least three weeks after the first public announcement of the event.



If you have a core group of volunteers and want to poll them to find a time that works best, consider an online calendaring tool like Doodle (www.doodle.com)

Engage volunteer groups

Engage the partners you've already identified and other users of the space. Additional groups to reach out to include:

- Keep Oakland Beautiful (www.keeпоaklandbeautiful.org)
- Existing neighborhood clean-up groups
- Homeowners or tenants associations
- Friends, family, and anyone else that wants to help!

Use your own and local groups' email lists and social media to remind as many people as possible to come out to your event, two to three times before it happens. Many neighborhoods have local list-serves or use Nextdoor (www.nextdoor.com). And don't forget to ask the local NCPC to notify members.

Get the word out

Effective publicity is the cornerstone of a successful event. A variety of people need to know about your event; volunteers need to know so they can join, companies need to know so they can contribute and local politicians need to know so they can provide resources. The City of Oakland Environmental Stewardship Team needs to know to provide information, resources, and ensure safety and city standards are met.

Engage media, so they will produce stories, interviews, and articles for free. Invite media and professional communications people into your team at the start. Ask media channels to contribute by donating advertising time or space. Be creative, positive and look for solutions. Don't fight anyone, unite everyone! Remember that you are targeting the mindset, not someone in particular. You are bringing empowerment and hope to each person by sending a message that a better way is possible and everyone can help.

Keep Oakland Beautiful is ready to share ideas and help you too, so don't hesitate to contact us. Remember internal communication, especially when your team is large (the tail has to know what the head is doing). Be sure to keep everyone informed on how you are progressing as a team, right from the start. Finally, don't forget the public - be open about your preparation and win everyone over by being honest, positive, and inclusive!

For Your Information



Some additional pointers as you think about planning, communicating and executing your event:

- Send out an early invitation that clearly states event goals and logistics
- Be consistent in your messaging when talking about your event
- Be creative and make it easy and fun for the attendees to be participate

Gather Tools & Equipment

For cleanup projects, grabbers (aka pick-up sticks), brooms, dustpans, rakes, and shovels are generally the most useful tools. Gloves and high visibility safety vests should always be used. Depending on the project, dust masks, and other safety equipment might be needed.

As a general rule, try to have as many tools as you have volunteers. If you can't get that many, consider pairing up volunteers in teams of two so one person can pick up trash with a tool while the other holds open a trash bag.

While you and your volunteers can bring your own tools and supplies, you don't have to buy them. The City of Oakland Environmental Stewardship Team can loan you tools and provide supplies (gloves, bags, paint, safety equipment, etc.). A tool loan request form is available at www.oaklandadoptaspot.org.

You can borrow additional tools from the [Oakland Tool Lending Library](#) for free for a 4-day period.

Oakland Tool Lending Library
5205 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, CA 94609
(510) 597-5089

[List of tools and lending guidelines](#)

Please note that the City of Oakland does not allow volunteers to use power tools. City staff may be able to operate power tools to support projects. Please coordinate this with the Environmental Stewardship Team.

Other than tools, a couple of tables and chairs are a handy place for refreshments and sign-up sheets.

Finally, if you have a larger project, you may need to obtain a City permit to rent portable toilets. Information on rentals can be found here:



Use the **Public Works Tools Request** form below to reserve your tools.

Shop for critical supplies

Some items can't be borrowed from the City or from the lending library, and will have to be purchased. Common examples include hand sanitizer, bottled water, and sunscreen. As an alternative to bottled water, consider bringing coolers and paper cups (and encourage your volunteers to bring their own reusable water bottle).

Executing Your Event

Get there early

A key to making the day a success is to have everything set up and ready to go when your volunteers arrive. We suggest that you and a few of the people helping plan the event arrive at least an hour before the start of the event.

Provide refreshments if possible

Ensure you have water for volunteers. Consider providing other beverages and snacks such as coffee, tea, pastries, fruit, and snack bars. Call your local coffee shop/bakery to see if they will donate these.

Set up a center of operations

Pick a place that will be your home base. Set up tables and chairs if you have them, and lay out refreshments, City of Oakland waivers [below], work gloves, sunscreen, etc.

Make sure volunteers can find you

A homemade sign on a large sheet of paper will do, or have one of your volunteers wear a safety vest and stand somewhere visible to direct people to your home base.

Give an introduction and safety talk

Once volunteers have gathered and signed waivers, ask them to gather around for a quick talk. Items to cover include:

- Thank everyone for coming out, give an overview of the event and its significance within the community
- Remind them to sign a waiver sheet if they haven't already
- Identify specific goals for the day
- Introduce people who helped organize the event, and point out that volunteers should ask these people if they have any questions during the day
- Boundaries for where you will be picking up trash (e.g. don't go past the creek on the far side of the field....)
- Discussion of ecological impact (e.g. if you are doing a creek cleanup, talk about how creeks drain to bay and carry trash with them if they aren't cleaned)
- Safety concerns
- Ask adults to work in pairs

- If children are present, identify team leaders for them
- Tell everyone what time to return to the home base

Liability Waivers

As volunteers sign in for your event, you will want to make sure they also receive and sign a liability waiver. The waiver is an agreement that the volunteer will uphold the volunteer guidelines. A liability waiver is important because it ensures volunteers assume responsibility for all liability and risk associated with their participation, and agree to hold you and the City of Oakland harmless in case something should happen.



Find the [Volunteer Waiver & Release Liability](http://www.oaklandadoptaspot.org) at www.oaklandadoptaspot.org.



Be sure to use the [Group Waiver](http://www.oaklandadoptaspot.org) available on www.oaklandadoptaspot.org on the day of your event.

Both of these waivers are at the end of this Guide.

Wrap it up

At the end of the event, have everyone return to home base and do a quick debrief. Ask people if they have any experiences from the day they want to share, and thank everyone for their participation.

A few other things to do as you wrap up:

- Ensure all tools are accounted for by collecting and inventorying them
- Count the number of bags of debris, estimate their weight, and group them together in the planned pick up location(s).
- If possible, photograph volunteers near the debris bags. Pictures provide documentation of the project as well as a marketing tool to build enthusiasm for future events (Facebook posts, images for local news articles, and thank you letters to collaborators)

Contact Oakland Public Works to make sure trash gets picked up

To arrange for Public Works to pick up City-issued trash or green waste bags:

- Consolidate small bags as much as possible.
- Place all bags in a safe location out of the street and not blocking the public right of way, such as by a street corner or litter container.
- Contact the Public Works Call Center at (510) 615-5566 (Mon-Fri between 8am - 4:30pm), or report online 24/7 by emailing pwacallcenter@oaklandnet.com or using the [SeeClickFix](#) app on your smartphone.
- Report that you are a volunteer and describe the type of debris, quantity of bags, and the nearest address or intersection.



[SeeClickFix](#) is an online and mobile tool that helps residents report and track non-emergency problems, such as graffiti, illegal dumping or potholes. With apps for iPhone, Android and Blackberry, and a Web interface that is simple and intuitive, users can submit a report with a photo, track requests and monitor local activity. Attention bloggers: SeeClickFix widgets can be created to place on your blog or website, so your readers can report a problem directly from your blog or website: <http://seeclickfix.com/widget>.

Report

Report your volunteer hours back to the City Of Oakland. A reporting form is available online at www.oaklandadoptaspot.org.

General Safety Guidelines

- ✓ Wear appropriate footwear (close-toed shoes), clothing (long pants and sleeves), sunscreen, hat, and eye protection (when necessary).
- ✓ Stay hydrated.
- ✓ For emergencies, call 911, or from a cell phone call 510-777-3211 (Oakland).
- ✓ In the event of injury while volunteering, please notify City of Oakland staff ASAP at adoptaspot@oaklandnet.com, 510-238-7630.

Traffic Safety

- ✓ Stay out of the street when possible.
- ✓ When working in or around a gutter, work from the sidewalk.
- ✓ If working near traffic, wear a bright reflective work vest or bright-colored clothing.
- ✓ Cross streets at signals or crosswalks, not mid-block.

Working Near Waterways

- ✓ Always work with a partner near water.
- ✓ Avoid touching poison oak. Bath and wash clothes after potential contact.
- ✓ Watch your footing on slopes and shorelines.
- ✓ Never allow children to work on steep slopes or near shorelines without adult supervision.

Tool Safety

- ✓ Do not use power tools.
- ✓ Carry tools carefully to avoid hitting others. Best is to carry tools vertically with the tool pointed down.
- ✓ Always use the right tools for the job. Ask a team leader or City staff if you are unsure.
- ✓ Never allow children to play with or use sharp tools.
- ✓ Always keep your tools close to you.
- ✓ When not using tools, neatly place them out of the way to prevent trip hazards.
- ✓ Count and clean your tools after an activity/cleanup.
- ✓ Return borrowed tools and supplies, as agreed.

(Adopted from the City of Oakland Public Works Volunteer Guidelines, which are available [here](#))

In many cases, a successful event is nothing more than good pre-planning. If you follow all the recommended tasks described here, your event should have fewer problems and you can concentrate on day-of tasks and wrap up on time. Providing a well-organized event, that has the resources needed to get the job done, and that concludes at the scheduled time, is one of the best ways you can show your respect for your volunteers.

Following Up

A couple of days after your event, send out an email blast to your volunteers and thank them for their work. A few “before” and “after” pictures are always appreciated.

Over the following weeks and months, monitor your site. Does it stay clean or does litter return? From this you can consider when a follow-up event might be appropriate.



VOLUNTEER TOOL REQUEST FORM

My Community - My Responsibility

- Adopt a Spot
- Adopt a Park
- Adopt a Creek
- Adopt a Drain
- Community Cleanup

Name/Organization: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ **Ph:** _____

Project Location: _____ **Cell:** _____

Type of Activity: _____ **Fax:** _____

of Volunteers: _____

Project Date: _____ **Project Time and Duration:** _____

Debris Plan (*Place bags in the agreed-upon place and call the PWA Call Center at 510-615-5566*):

Tool Lending (*Volunteer must have an appointment with a Public Works Staff person to pick up or return tools*):

Choose one of the following locations:

- 1. 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza (at the loading dock behind the building, at San Pablo & 16th St) Tool Pick-up Appt:
- 2. 5050 Coliseum Way (enter at guard shack, go around buildings to the back of the yard) Tool Return Appt:

Choose the type and amount of tools needed (note type of tool if more than one listed in parentheses):

| Tool | # | Returned | Tool | # | Returned | Tool | # | Returned | Tool | # | Returned |
|-------------------------------|---|----------|----------------------|---|----------|-------------------------------|---|----------|-----------------------|---|----------|
| Bags, trash | | | Gloves (latex) | | | Lopper | | | Rake, metal | | |
| Bags, paper greenwaste | | | Gloves (work) | | | Mattock (15", 23" or 32") | | | Shovel, square flat | | |
| Bags, reusable greenwaste | | | Graffiti kit | | | Paint (note color) | | | Shovel, round pointed | | |
| Broom, house (large or small) | | | Hand saw | | | Paint roller/Pans | | | Shovel, scoop | | |
| Broom, push | | | Hand trowel | | | Pickup stick (large or small) | | | Vests | | |
| Dust pan | | | Hand weeder | | | Pitchfork | | | Water Cooler | | |
| Flags | | | Hedge shear | | | Pruner/Clipper | | | Other: | | |
| | | | Hoe (large or small) | | | Rake, leaf (large or small) | | | | | |

Picked up by: _____ **Date:** _____

Returned by: _____ **Date:** _____

of Volunteers: _____ **Total Volunteer Hours:** _____

Return this form to adoptaspot@oaklandnet.com or fax to (510) 238-7286
Questions? Contact us by email at adoptaspot@oaklandnet.com or by phone at (510) 238-7630

VOLUNTEER WAIVER & RELEASE OF LIABILITY

I, _____, am voluntarily participating in the Oakland Public Works volunteer program at _____. I have read and agree to follow the Volunteer Guidelines. I acknowledge my participation in these events does not come without the risk of injury or harm; I accept this risk, and assume responsibility for all liability and risk associated with my participation.

I agree to hold harmless, release, waive and forever discharge the City of Oakland, its employees, departments, officers and agents, from any and all claims or demands I may have by reason of any accident, illness, injury, loss, destruction or damage to property, arising or resulting directly or indirectly from my participation in this activity. I further covenant not to bring any legal action against the City of Oakland, its employees, departments, officers and agents, for any injury, loss or damage resulting from my participation in this activity.

This Waiver and Release is contractual and not a mere recital and applies whether or not injury or loss resulting from this activity is caused by an act or omission of the City, its employees, departments, officers or agents, negligent or otherwise.

This Waiver and Release is binding on my heirs, executors, administrators, assigns, and all of my family members, and applies to all losses, whether known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, related to my participation in this activity.

I hereby grant permission to the City of Oakland to use photographs and video of me taken during this activity on its website and in other publications, at the City's sole discretion and without further consideration.

This Waiver and Release was executed on _____, 20__ at Oakland, California and is valid for a 12 month period from the date of signing.

Print Participant's Name

Age (if under 18)

Signature of Participant*

Date

**If under 18 years old, parent or guardian must also sign below*

Print Parent/Guardian Name

Signature of Parent/Guardian

This form and a version that accommodates multiple signatures are available at www.oaklandadoptspot.org.



Site Coordinator: _____ Event: _____ Date: _____

Please legibly write your name and contact information. Read the Volunteer Guidelines and the Waiver & Release of Liability (below). Sign to the right to acknowledge you've read and agree to both. **(Note: If volunteer is a minor, parent or guardian must sign.)**

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____ | |
| Street Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____ | <i>Signature</i> |
| How did you learn about this event? <input type="checkbox"/> Poster/Flyer <input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Word of Mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Postcard <input type="checkbox"/> City Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |
| Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____ | |
| Street Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____ | <i>Signature</i> |
| How did you learn about this event? <input type="checkbox"/> Poster/Flyer <input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Word of Mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Postcard <input type="checkbox"/> City Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |
| Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____ | |
| Street Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____ | <i>Signature</i> |
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| Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____ | |
| Street Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____ | <i>Signature</i> |
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Waiver & Release of Liability

I am voluntarily participating in the City of Oakland's Public Works volunteer program. I have read and agree to follow the Volunteer Guidelines. I acknowledge my participation in these events does not come without the risk of injury or harm; I accept this risk, and assume responsibility for all liability and risk associated with my participation. I agree to hold harmless, release, waive and forever discharge the City of Oakland, its employees, departments, officers and agents, from any and all claims or demands I may have by reason of any accident, illness, injury, loss, destruction or damage to property, arising or resulting directly or indirectly from my participation in this activity. I further covenant not to bring any legal action against the City of Oakland, its employees, departments, officers and agents, for any injury, loss or damage resulting from my participation in this activity. This Waiver and Release is contractual and not a mere recital and applies whether or not injury or loss resulting from this activity is caused by an act or omission of the City, its employees, departments, officers or agents, negligent or otherwise. This Waiver and Release is binding on my heirs, executors, administrators, assigns, and all of my family members, and applies to all losses, whether known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, related to my participation in this activity. I hereby grant permission to the City of Oakland to use photographs and video of me taken during this activity on its website and in other publications, at the City's sole discretion and without further consideration. This Waiver and Release was executed on the above date at Oakland, California and is valid for a 12 month period from the date of signing.