

Ontario's Litter Cleanup Guide



Thank you for participating in a litter cleanup!

If you have questions, please visit:

www.ontario.ca/actONlitter or contact actONlitter@ontario.ca.



Promote Your Cleanup!

On the day of your cleanup have fun and share instant results in your online community.

Share 'before and after' photos of your cleanup and the site you cleaned up on social media using the hashtag **[#actONlitter!](#)**

Checklist:



Leading up to the cleanup

- Choose a cleanup day. The Provincial Day of Action on Litter takes place the second Tuesday in May each year, but you can clean up any day of the year!
- Identify your cleanup team participants.
- Choose a cleanup site with your participants.
- Gather protective equipment, such as gloves or a litter grabber, for the cleanup team or ensure they will be bringing their own. It is also a great idea to have hand sanitizer available.
- If cleaning up a public space, contact your municipality to identify if any permits are required to host a cleanup there and request help obtaining a permit (if applicable). If cleaning up a private space, ensure you have permission from the property owner.
- Choose a disposal method, a few examples include:
 - Personal garbage and recycling bins. You may need to speak with your condo or apartment building management about disposing through their waste collection services.
 - If no available method exists for you, reach out to your municipality to see if they can support your disposal, such as by using a city street disposal garbage can and recycling bin.
- Prepare your cleanup team to collect data during their cleanup. See page 8 – 9 of this document for a Litter Cleanup Reporting Form and more information.
- Share important information with cleanup participants ahead of your cleanup, such as:
 - safety tips/recycling tips
 - reminder of what to bring (for example garbage and recycling collection bags, water bottle, appropriate clothing for the weather, a mask and gloves phone, etc.)
 - when and where you are meeting



On the day of the cleanup

- Prepare any of your coordinator materials (participant attendee list, pens, first aid kit, hand sanitizer, etc.).
- Meet your cleanup team at your scheduled meeting date, time and location.
- Go over:
 - safety requirements (i.e. wearing gloves and watching for traffic)
 - cleanup boundary
 - end time and meeting point
 - contact information
 - disposal requirements
- Use both a recycling bag and garbage bag to correctly separate recyclable materials from garbage.
- Have participants collect data on the litter they clean up (see page 8 - 9 for more information).
- Have fun! Take photos of your progress and your cleanup team – consider taking a before and after photo of your site to show the progress. Post photos publicly to social media using the #actONlitter hashtag.

After the cleanup

- Dispose of your collected litter properly, and ensure collected recyclables are recycled. Ensure used personal protective equipment such as gloves and masks are disposed of properly and safely in a sealed garbage bag.
- Submit all collected litter data to the ministry by completing this [Litter Cleanup Reporting form](#).

Safety tips!

Safety first! Review the safety tips below and take the necessary precautions during your community cleanup.



- Use personal protective equipment (gloves) or a litter grabber when picking up litter and properly dispose of your own personal protective equipment safely in a sealed garbage bin after your cleanup.
- Cleanups should take place during daylight hours and should not take place after sunset or before sunrise.
- Be mindful of unstable or slippery ground (for example ravines, river banks), in tunnels or near stormwater management ponds.
- Consider wearing a safety vest or brightly coloured clothing if collecting litter along a roadway.
- Do not pick up dangerous materials such as glass, barbed wire, syringes/needles, medical waste, pipes, chemicals and debris with sharp or rusted edges. Instead note down the item and the location, and after your cleanup contact your local municipality's waste management department to make them aware.
- Avoid water-filled areas such as ditches, streams or ponds. Be extra cautious in areas where there could be water or ice.
- Be careful of wild animals, insects, hives and nests, and noxious weeds such as poison ivy and giant hogweed.
- Report suspicious items to the local police department via their non-emergency telephone number or to the Ontario Provincial Police non-emergency number at 1-888-310-1122.

Recycling tips



- Use separate disposal bags for recyclables and garbage whenever possible.
- Some municipalities have a mobile waste app that you can use on the go to find out what items should be recycled versus put in the garbage or that are hazardous waste – check with your local municipality and download the app in advance if available!
- Keep hazardous waste separate from garbage and recycling. Remember safety first! You can always leave certain items as you found them, note down the item and the location, and after your cleanup contact your local waste management department to make them aware. Examples of hazardous waste include:
 - syringes (don't touch!)
 - batteries
 - aerosol containers
 - fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)
 - helium and propane/BBQ tanks/cylinders

Cleanup site ideas

- trails
- common play areas in your community
- a public park
- the sidewalks along a neighbourhood street
- vacant lots or parking lots (ensure you have owner's permission)



Instructions

- **Before you leave for your cleanup:** Download or print out the litter cleanup reporting form on the next page.
- **During and just after your cleanup:** Track and record the litter collected using the form. Please follow the safety tips when collecting litter and track only those materials listed on the form.
- **When your cleanup is over:** take the information you tracked home and go online to www.ontario.ca/actONlitter and select the 'Litter cleanup reporting form' link on the right-hand side of the page to submit this information to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.
- This information will help us to better understand litter in our environment, and may help inform future government decision making – we thank you for taking part and submitting your litter cleanup data!

Litter cleanup reporting form

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Date of cleanup | |
| 2. Number of people participating in cleanup | |
| 3. Other cleanup site location information (address, park name, road name, lake name, etc.) | |
| 4. Type of cleanup site (park, shoreline or beach, trail, street, etc.) | |
| 5. Total number of garbage bags collected | |
| 6. Total number of recycling bags collected | Small (for example grocery bag) Medium (for example kitchen garbage bag) Large (for example black garbage bag) |
| 7. Most unique or funny piece of litter collected | Small (for example grocery bag) Medium (for example kitchen garbage bag) Large (for example black garbage bag) |
| 8. Most unique or funny piece of litter collected | |
| 9. Email address to contact organizers for future Days of Action on Litter (optional) | |

Litter breakdown (optional):

The litter breakdown below is optional, to help the province better understand the amount and types of litter being found. Thank you for your participation!

| MATERIAL | COUNT (estimates ok) |
|---|----------------------|
| Plastic Items | |
| 1. Plastic beverage containers & bottle caps | |
| 2. Plastic straws | |
| 3. Plastic utensils | |
| 4. Plastic grocery bags | |
| 5. Other plastic packaging (for example food wrappers, zipper bags) | |
| Other Items | |
| 6. Cigarette Butts | |
| 7. Other foodware items (for example foam take out containers) | |
| 8. Glass Bottles | |
| 9. Metal items (for example aluminum cans, metal bottle caps) | |
| 10. Personal hygiene products (for example toothbrush, disposable wipes) | |
| 11. Clothing items | |
| 12. Pet Waste Bags | |

ACT on LITTER

