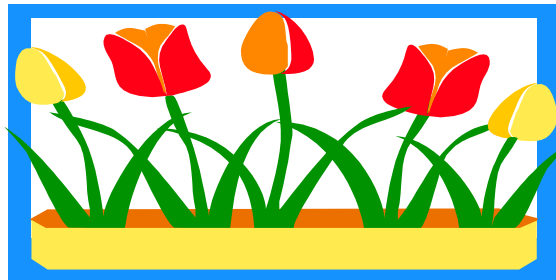


COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP

Tips from Keep America Beautiful®



Your community-improvement project will encourage more responsible attitudes.

You've decided it's time you, your group, or class did something to improve the community. That's a good idea because it can encourage other people to take pride in their city or town and not litter.

You may have a project in mind already. If not, there is one waiting right now to be discovered. It could be a cleanup or graffiti paint-over, the restoration of a neglected park or historic monument, turning a vacant lot into a community garden, or volunteering to "adopt" an area and keep it clean.

If any part of your project includes cleaning up litter or removing a pile of trash, there are several important things you should know before getting started.

Why People Litter

Research conducted by Keep America Beautiful, Inc. has found that people litter because they feel no sense of ownership for the property; because they believe someone else will pick up after them; and because litter has already accumulated.

Dealing With Illegal Dumping

Some people also dump garbage, old appliances, tree branches – anything that fits in a car or truck – in less-traveled places or somewhere they think they won't be caught. This is illegal dumping. It may also happen because material has been banned from landfill without an alternative plan, or because people think the cost to dispose of their household garbage legally is too high. This can be combated through cleanups, restricting access to places where people can drive in and dump, and asking area residents to report suspicious activity.

Your Project Can Change Attitudes

Changing attitudes about waste and its handling reduces litter and dumping. Your project can help in two important ways. Removing litter or graffiti and cleaning up the area will make it less likely to attract more waste. And involving people helps them appreciate the environment more and learn that their actions matter.

Where Can I Get Help?

You should make a special effort to contact local or county public works, highway, or sanitation departments well in advance. Officials may be able to send a truck to pick up bagged litter or big items or provide paint to cover graffiti.

Businesses can be asked to donate snacks and drinks, or buy flowers your group will plant nearby. Also contact local Scout troops and youth organizations and ask for their participation.

Ideas to Make A Project Work

- ✘ Be creative in selecting a project. Restoring an old monument, for example, is an opportunity for students to learn about local history and write a report.
- ✘ Select a project whose benefits will be enjoyed by many people.
- ✘ Get permission from the government agency responsible for the land or the property owner.
- ✘ Visit the site. Knowing that there are large objects makes it easier to plan their removal.
- ✘ Take “before” and “after” photos.
- ✘ Tell your local newspaper, radio, and television station about the project and the positive impact it will have.
- ✘ Keep a diary, complete with names and phone numbers, should you decide to do the project again.
- ✘ After the project, write thank-you letters to anyone who donated goods or services, and to public officials who involved their departments.
- ✘ Be sure to thank everyone who volunteered.

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Keep America Beautiful, Inc. is a national, non-profit public education organization with local affiliates, dedicated to improving waste handling practices in American communities.