

GUIDANCE FOR VOLUNTEER LITTER PICKERS

ENABLE LEISURE AND CULTURE

Whilst many find litter-picking an enjoyable, satisfying and rewarding activity, individual and group volunteer litter pickers can be exposed to a number of easily avoidable hazards. This guide has been produced to help you identify these hazards and help keep you and other volunteers safe.

If you wish to undertake a litter-picking activity in one of Wandsworth's greenspaces, you need to contact the Parks Engagement Officer (mvelasco@enablelc.org) at least 4 weeks in advance to arrange an appropriate date and time for your activity, to ensure that no other event or activity has been booked for the same space at the same time, for biodiversity advice and for organising your litter bags to be collected.

The following recommendations are strongly advised:

Protective Clothing

- ✓ **Suitable footwear** to reduce likelihood of slips/falls and possible injury. Closed shoes with good soles are recommended when clearing rough, uneven ground, or woodland/undergrowth areas.
- ✓ **Suitable clothing** to reduce the likelihood of possible injury from sharp twigs/branches/brambles etc.
 - Bare arms and legs are not advisable when clearing woodland/undergrowth areas
- ✓ **A hat with a peak** is recommended when clearing woodland/undergrowth areas to avoid risk of eye injury from twigs and brambles.
- ✓ **Something that makes you clearly visible** (like reflective hi-vis bibs) - to traffic and pedestrians
 - Being identified as a volunteer to other users may also initiate a constructive dialogue.
- ✓ As litter picking is an outdoor event, dress and prepare appropriately for the weather conditions

Equipment

- ✓ To avoid direct handling of litter
 - **Litter picker/grabber** - use also avoids undue bending and reaching
 - **Thick gloves** – use also avoids risk of contact with noxious, sharp or dangerous materials
- ✓ **Mobile phone** to contact colleagues out of sight/earshot or the emergency services (if required).
- ✓ **Bags and bag hoops (to hold bags open)** – to collect rubbish
 - You may wish to have one bag for rubbish and one for recycling; in this instance, working in pairs, one with each type, can be helpful
 - If you anticipate collecting sharp objects bring a hard container e.g. a cardboard box

Dangerous or Hazardous Materials

The following materials may be encountered during litter picks and should be treated with caution, if you find any of them please as soon as possible call or email Parks Police (0208 8717532 or 07500 959442, parkspolice@wandsworth.gov.uk) with precise location, site name, time, etc.:

- ✓ **Broken glass** – Avoid any hand contact; remove only if you have a solid container to put it in, using a litter picker. If not, note the site and alert our Parks Contract officers deckersley@enablelc.org / agreen@enablelc.org to its presence and please email Parks Police as they need to record it.
- ✓ **Drug related litter/needles/any suspect materials or items** that are possibly dangerous such as unknown liquids in containers, asbestos - These should not be touched; please don't attempt to clear it. Please call Parks Police and inform the Parks Engagement Officer too mvelasco@enablelc.org
- ✓ **Fly tipping materials** – Don't attempt to clear it, please use the Wandsworthreportit app (for graffiti and fly tipping) or, as soon as possible, contact Parks Police.

Lost Property

Should you find items clearly mislaid rather than littered, please keep them separately and contact Parks Police (0208 8717532 / 07500 959442 / parkspolice@wandsworth.gov.uk).

Lifting and Manual Handling

To avoid injury or contamination, the following basic principles should be applied:

- ✓ Use litter pickers and/or gloves
- ✓ If an item can't be safely removed by one person, don't lift it.
- ✓ Wash hands and forearms before eating, drinking, smoking or going to the toilet.

General Site Safety

- ✓ If by a road: restrict activity to areas where there are wide verges or pavements, suitable for pedestrians, and face oncoming traffic.
- ✓ When litter picking adjacent to busy roads, hi-visibility garments should be worn, and litter picks conducted in good visibility conditions.
- ✓ Avoid reaching into hedges or undergrowth that may expose the face, eyes and skin to scratches from thorns or branches.
- ✓ Avoid working close to lakes unless previously agreed, as there is an increased risk of slips and falls.
- ✓ Be wary of wasp, hornet and bee nests!
- ✓ Do not enter an area, or attempt to litter pick an area, where works are restricted, are already taking place, or where the public do not have a right to entry.

Please avoid disturbing wildlife

Undergrowth in woodland and long grass areas between the end of February and the beginning of September should be left undisturbed for the reason that small mammals, invertebrates and some birds may be nesting there.

Young Volunteers

Age plays a big part in people's ability to recognise and avoid risk. With that in mind, a parent or guardian should always supervise volunteers under the age of 18.

Insurance

Volunteer litter pickers are not working for, or on behalf of, Enable Leisure and Culture or Wandsworth Borough Council, and therefore are not covered by the Council's and/or Enable's insurance. Obtaining public liability insurance is essential. This will provide cover for your legal liability arising from accidental damage or injury that may occur during the event, including damage or injury to a member of the public or their property. If you represent an organisation, such as a local school, it is probable that you already have insurance in place, but it is important to check that litter picking activities are covered under such insurance. If not, a suitable extension should be made to the policy.

For information

Volunteers should not participate in litter picks unless they understand and accept that participation is entirely at their own risk. Volunteers are not working for, or on behalf of Enable Leisure and Culture or Wandsworth Borough Council, and therefore the Council and/or ELC cannot be held liable for any loss, damage or injury caused as a result of the actions and omissions of volunteers.



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