



EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. INTRODUCTION

Individuals and groups acting as volunteers in the fight against litter, recognise the potential harm that litter causes to the environment and also the possible injury litter can cause to people, domestic pets and wildlife. However, there are a number of easily avoided hazards that volunteers could be exposed to, so the following principals and practices, which are designed to make your event a safe and enjoyable one, should be applied at all times.

2. PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

The following items of equipment should be used at all times by volunteers undertaking litter picks

- Reflective bibs to clearly highlight volunteers to the public and traffic
- Gloves to minimise risk of contact with noxious substances
- Litter Pickers to minimise repetitive bending
- Stout footwear and suitable outdoor clothing that doesn't leave bare areas of skin

The bibs, gloves and litter pickers will be supplied by the Council

3. NOXIOUS AND DANGEROUS MATERIALS

The following items may be encountered during a litter pick and should be dealt with as follows

- a) Broken Glass – Collect using either a litter picker or brush and shovel, avoiding contact by hand and place in a stout cardboard box or container in quantities that can be easily lifted and moved. The Council will supply limited quantities of brushes and shovels if required
- b) Hypodermic Needles – These should not be moved under any circumstances and their location reported to the Council by phoning 01875 618600
- c) Suspect Materials – Items that are possibly dangerous such as unknown liquids in containers, building materials that may contain asbestos or piles of mixed fly tipping should not be handled by volunteers

4. GENERAL SITE SAFETY AND INSPECTION

- a) Working on areas beside roads should be restricted to those within 40 MPH limits and only then, where there is a pedestrian footway separating the road from the site
- b) Work should not be undertaken next to deep or fast flowing water or steep slopes
- c) Work in areas that house wild animals or birds should be undertaken with care so as to avoid disturbance to such.
- d) Where the site isn't owned by East Lothian Council, the landowners express permission should be obtained before undertaking any litter picking and any local hazards should be clearly identified.
- e) All sites should be given a visual inspection by a responsible person, ideally someone who is trained in Risk Assessment, prior to litter picking commencing, to identify and mark possible hazards. Specific attention should be paid to sharps, Wasp & Bee nests, trip hazards and harmful substances.
- f) Where working next to hedges and shrubs / undergrowth, avoid reaching in such a way as to expose the face, eyes and skin to scratches from thorns or broken branches. If the item of litter can't be safely reached with a litter picker, leave it.
- g) Do not attempt to enter an area where work is being undertaken such as a building site or business premises

5. LIFTING AND HANDLING MATERIALS

Volunteers should be aware of the risk of injury by attempting to lift and carry heavy materials and carrying bags of collected litter. To this end the following basic principals of Manual Handling Guidelines should be applied

- Decide if an item can be safely moved either by one or two people
- Only try to move an item if this can be done so without straining
- Make sure an item is safe with no sharp edges or noxious contents
- Plan the route an item is to be carried over to make sure it's clear
- Use litter pickers to prevent constant bending and stretching
- Make sure the ground conditions won't cause a slip or fall while carrying
- Bend the legs, keep the back straight and the load close to the torso, when lifting an item
- Remember it's not just the weight of the item, the position of the body and way the item is lifted are just as important

6. YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

While it is beneficial to the community to get young people involved in litter related projects, age plays a big part in the ability to recognise and avoid risk. Accordingly, where children are involved in community litter picks, there should be a minimum of 1 responsible adult to every 10 children and there should be no groups of children under the age of 16 working in an area without direct supervision of an adult.

Where children are involved, the group leader must take specific time to explain these guidelines and take particular care to describe and point out the potential hazards of noxious materials, sharps and identified hazards on the site

7. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Prior to starting a community litter pick, the group organiser should identify appropriate procedures that will be followed in the event of an emergency. In particular a means of administering First Aid either by a trained group member or by way of access to local medical services. At least one member of the group should have access to a phone in order to call for emergency assistance in the event of a group member being injured or falling ill.

8. SUMMARY

Always apply the principal of working in a safe manner and remember that, as a volunteer you have a duty towards yourself, your fellow volunteers and the general public to act responsibly and safely. If in any doubt at all about the possible hazards of a site, situation or material, avoid it and move onto something that clearly presents no hazard.

9. FORM OF INDEMNITY

Volunteers should not to participate in this initiative unless they are able to meet, accept and agree to follow these guidelines and understand that participation is at their own risk. East Lothian Council has endeavoured to make this guidance informative but makes no warranties or representation, express or implied, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained or referenced herein. East Lothian Council will not be held liable for any direct, indirect, special, consequential or other loss or damage that results from volunteers' participation in this initiative unless it has been negligent