

## Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management

### Community Cleanup Guidebook

**Purpose:** As part of Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management’s Solid Waste Plan, we encourage recycling and proper management of problem materials. This guidebook intends to focus on how a community/civic group or organization could conduct a community collection to collect problem materials and other waste items to capture **potential fundraising revenue** for their group by putting on a collection. The focus items typical at community collection consist of the following items:

Primary Materials Collected:

1. Electronics/E-waste
2. Appliances

Optional Materials Collected:

1. Scrap Metal
2. Brush/Trees/Yard Waste
3. Garbage/Junk/Rubbish
4. Construction and Demolition Waste

Hazardous Materials Collected:

1. \*Household Hazardous Waste
2. \*Fluorescent Bulbs
3. \*Batteries

*\*Contact Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management about ‘Hazardous Materials’ options at Community Cleanup Events.*

### Safety First!

You want your event to be productive and fun. Having safety policies and procedures in place will help avoid cleanup hazards and deal efficiently with safety issues that may come up. A proactive commitment to safety lets your volunteers know that their well-being is important to you.

To ensure that your event is as safe as possible, think “A-B-C.”

Assess your risks

Be prepared

Communicate clearly

### Assessing your risks

Cleanup risks can be divided into two broad categories: general risks and materials risks. General risks include such issues as site conditions, weather, traffic and people and simply “go with the territory” of holding a cleanup event. Materials risks result from potential hazards created by the items collected at the event.

### The site

Take time to evaluate your site before the event.

For “drop-off” events, such as neighborhood cleanups, determine:

- Best places on the site to locate parking, collection, sorting and volunteer check-in
- Any potential barriers to smooth traffic flow and collection of materials
- The necessary facilities available, such as rest rooms, water sources or shelter from heat or rain.

### The weather

You can’t predict the weather when planning months ahead of an event. But you should consider the most likely possibilities for the season in which your event takes place. Heat, cold, rain, wind...every weather scenario requires appropriate clothing.

Shelter and drinking water are essentials in any climate or season. Alert your volunteers to be prepared for possible weather conditions and to bring whatever needed items aren’t provided on site.

### Vehicles and traffic

- Have a traffic flow plan clearly communicated to volunteers.
- Use safety cones or other visible barriers to clearly indicate to drivers where to enter, drop materials and exit.
- Control traffic direction and speed by assigning volunteer “greeters” near points of entry and exit. Have plenty of volunteers at key locations to direct traffic and answer questions.

## People

Cleanup events usually attract a lot of people, who bring a variety of personalities, temperaments and expectations.

Consider the following in your planning:

- Which volunteers have experience in customer service or dealing with people who are cranky/inconvenienced by waiting in lines.
- Identifying a volunteer who is a good communicator and who works well with people.

Conflict and communications issues can occur during an event. It helps if people know there is a “go-to” person should difficulties arise. Inexperienced or untrained volunteers comprise another “human hazard.” The better you anticipate other potential problems and hazards, the better prepared you’ll be to orient your volunteers, make their experience as positive as possible and increase the likelihood that they’ll be “repeat performers” at future events.

## Hazardous materials

Hazardous waste collection events are the domain of trained professionals. Contact Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management in Alexandria for more information or at [www.popedouglasrecycle.com](http://www.popedouglasrecycle.com)

Safety experts recommend that organizers specifically prohibit the collection of toxic or hazardous materials at drop-off events. All promotional materials need to list what materials will not be accepted. However, you’ll get some things you haven’t asked for at your cleanup. These materials should never be combined in other bulky waste or yard debris containers.

### *Household waste may include common materials such as:*

- Pesticides, paint, toxic cleaning products or chemicals used in home workshops
- Scrap metal, old batteries, broken glass or “sharps” (e.g., hypodermic needles, razor blades.)

## Getting prepared

Once you’ve assessed the potential risks and hazards associated with your event, develop a plan to prevent mishaps and to deal with those that can’t be prevented. Consider the items listed below as you plan for your event.

### Staffing

Calculate the number of volunteers you’ll need for your event to run efficiently and safely.

### Safety gear and clothing

Keep volunteers safe by instructing them to wear or have:

- Closed-toe shoes – a must at any cleanup event
- Safety vests
- Eye protection
- Gloves (heavy weight and/or liquid proof)

**NOTE:** If your budget won’t accommodate the purchase of safety gear, perhaps community partners (e.g., local businesses) can loan or provide them as in-kind donations. **Otherwise, make certain that your volunteers bring needed gear.**

**NOTE:** Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management does have reflective safety vests that could be loaned and returned by the organization.

### In addition, plan to have on hand:

- First aid kit(s) - including saline solution for rinsing eyes
- Spill kit – at minimum, have on hand a container of cat litter for absorbing hazardous liquids
- Fire extinguisher
- Cell phone(s)

## On the day of your event:

- Greet and assign volunteers to their tasks as they arrive
- Review safety policies and procedures with them
- Remind them about the importance of looking after their own safety when lifting and moving materials
- Make certain they know what to do, and who to go to, in case of injury or spills, or if they encounter a “customer service” problem that they can’t readily resolve
- Have them complete and sign liability release forms
- Have trained volunteers rather than customers unload vehicles – **THIS WILL SPEED UP THE LINE!**
- Keep local agencies and authorities in the loop.

**NOTE:** Inform the local police and fire departments about the cleanup event. This is not only common courtesy, but also helps them to prepare for possible traffic issues created by vehicles entering and exiting the site.



### **Before an event:**

When planning an event, there are some important things to consider long before the day of your cleanup.

- **Funding.** Lining up funding for your event is “job one.” There are a number of local organizations that provide funding and support for neighborhood or community cleanups.

**NOTE:** Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management is able to assist with advertising collection events.

**NOTE:** Depending on the type of collection, the community group can work with the hauler/recycler to work out a better deal for certain items and charge the community participant a slightly inflated rate of disposal to cover other costs or to provide additional fundraising revenue for the community/civic group or organization.

- **Recordkeeping.** Be prepared from the very beginning to keep receipts and records, from the number of people who attended to the cost of waste disposal.

- **Planning.** You’ll need to find a location that is large enough for the type of event you want to hold, and then get the necessary permissions or permits.

**NOTE:** Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management might be able to assist with location search.

- **Volunteers.** How you recruit and motivate volunteers will make a real difference in the success of your event.

- **Logistics.** Lining up haulers and deciding what material you want to accept at your event is the last crucial piece of the “before” stage. Good planning and preparation will ensure that you keep costs down, keep recycling up and keep the material moving throughout your event.

### **Business sponsors and donors**

As you shop for goods or services for your event (including garbage hauling and recycling services), ask if businesses will donate all or a portion of the cost of the goods or services. Many cleanup organizers solicit donations of refreshments for volunteers, printing services for signs and fliers, and gift certificates to raffle or distribute as volunteer incentives. Other local businesses may be willing to sponsor your event or some part of it. Emphasize that your event involves the local community, and that you will promote sponsor businesses in your publicity and at the event.

Example below of business sponsorship sign posted onsite.



## BEFORE

### Site planning and layout

#### Secure a location

School parking lots, government buildings, churches or businesses that will be closed on the day of your event are ideal.

#### Look for sites that have:

- A paved surface with adequate clearance for drop boxes
- Easy access (entrance from a secondary street helps)
- Good visibility
- A separate entrance and exit, preferably at opposite ends of the site
- **Bathroom and hand-washing facilities** (if the site does not have access to bathroom facilities, check “Toilets – Portable” in the Yellow Pages)

Get formal permission from the property owner before proceeding with any other project planning. Contact the person in charge of the site, to discuss requirements.

**NOTE:** Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management might be able to assist event liability insurance if that is found to be required by the site owner.

**The week before the event,** contact the property owner as a reminder. If you are using a parking lot, ensure that it will be empty. If any drop boxes are going to be delivered early, ensure the hauler can easily access the site to drop off and collect the drop boxes.

#### Pick a date

- Saturdays are the best day to hold cleanup events.
- Reserve your drop boxes early to ensure availability of containers and services.
- Be aware of other types of events being held the same day.
- If sporting or other civic events are going on, traffic and parking issues are likely to arise. Talk to coordinators of these events to address parking, traffic and other logistics.

#### Map the site

As a part of your planning process, conduct a thorough site visit. Walking the site will help you refine your goals, determine logistics and estimate the number of volunteers you will need.

Invite the garbage hauler and other service providers, the property owner and other key partners to walk the site with you. Create an initial site map.

#### Important considerations for site planning

- **Volunteer parking** Identify sufficient and secure parking for your volunteers and provide this information to them beforehand.
- **Volunteer hub** Have an area where volunteers sign in, receive training, receive safety vests (or other identification) and safety equipment, and can find refreshments.
- **Traffic flow** Consider how you will handle the customer traffic, including how you will queue up cars entering the site. Allow for some vehicle movement between drop boxes, since most loads will contain a mix of materials. Aim to reduce or eliminate foot traffic through lanes of auto traffic by routing customers and volunteers around traffic. Allow for room for vehicles to turn around.
- **Drop box placement** Drop boxes should be placed with plenty of room around them. The rear of the drop box (where the doors are located) should face the area where vehicles will pull up to unload debris. The area at the opposite side of the drop box needs to be large enough to allow hauling trucks easy access for pick-up.

#### Volunteers

General guidelines for recruiting and working with volunteers:

- If you are coordinating an annual event, approach recruitment as a year-round activity.
- Mention the need for volunteers in all publicity. If possible, provide both phone and e-mail contact information.
- When you recruit volunteers in person or through the media, briefly describe the goals of the cleanup and mention some specific volunteer jobs that need to be filled.
  - Emphasize the community benefits of your event.
  - Encourage volunteers to further develop the event based on their strengths or interests. A project builds community when volunteers feel that their contributions are appreciated and their judgment is trusted.
  - Safety and volunteerism are integrally connected: if volunteers do not feel safe, they will not return.
  - Be clear about your expectations and the working conditions. **If the work will be dirty, let your volunteers know.**

- Make sure that each volunteer knows the specific timeframe in which they are expected.
- Consider the diversity of your community in recruiting volunteers. Local churches, businesses and clubs can be important partners in connecting you with a variety of volunteers.

### Where to find volunteers

- Past volunteers are a good place to start; ask your committed volunteers to recruit family, friends and neighbors.
- Neighborhood association board members and meetings.
- Local schools that have community service requirements and/or environmental programs.
- Local churches, through community boards or newsletters.
- Local youth groups such as Explorers, Boy/Girl Scouts, or Earth Scouts.
- Service and social clubs, such as Kiwanis, Elks or Rotary.

### How to assign tasks to volunteers

- Divide and assign planning tasks.
- Volunteers are most effective when they are given clearly defined jobs.
- Assigning volunteers to a specific job or task also increases their sense of commitment.

**Event coordinator** Has responsibility for overall planning and logistics. Delegates jobs, but has responsibility for ensuring all the other jobs get done. Handles communications with the garbage/recycling haulers.

**Volunteer coordinator** Recruits volunteers, assigns cleanup day jobs. Motivates, evaluates and acts as a resource for volunteers. Places reminder and logistics call or e-mail to volunteers one week before the cleanup.

**Sponsorship coordinator** Solicits donations of money, goods and services.

**Site coordinator** Secures permission to use site. Creates site map and ensures that containers and equipment are set up according to plan.

**Publicity coordinator** Writes articles, prints signs and fliers and sends press releases.

**NOTE:** Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management is able to assist with advertising collection events.

**Treasurer** Keeps track of expenditures and receipts. On cleanup day, collects monies from volunteers taking fees.

### Day-of-event volunteers

Divide and assign event-day tasks. As you recruit cleanup day volunteers, sign them up for specific duties. Use a form that allows you to fill each job for each block of time during the day.

#### On-site jobs to assign include:

- Set up
- Hospitality – picks up refreshments for volunteers
- Greeter - checks in customers, ensures funds are properly collected and that restricted materials are turned away
- Fee collector (if money not taken by greeter)
- Traffic monitor
- **Unloaders. More the Merrier!**
- Clean up. During and After event.

### Volunteer reminders

One week before the cleanup, call or e-mail volunteers with information on:

- Location, date and time of the cleanup
- Specific instructions on where to park and check in
- How to dress and what tools or supplies to bring
- Specific instructions on what their role will be.

### Publicity

**NOTE:** Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management is able to assist with advertising collection events.

### General guidelines

- Size the promotion of your event with your capacity. If you are planning a small event, plan on a limited amount of advertising. If you are organizing a large-scale cleanup and want high numbers of both volunteers and attendees, your promotion needs to reach a larger audience. Contact media outlets with a wide audience such as neighborhood and citywide newspapers, and radio stations.
- Limit news releases and pre-event fliers to one page.

- Use your publicity to explain who can and cannot attend, what will and will not be accepted, and any fees that will be charged.
- Make certain that waste reduction and recycling information is included in all forms of publicity.
- Mention sponsors and partners in your publicity. Some may ask you to include their logo on any advertising.
- Consider residents in your community without access to computers or the Internet when providing contact information regarding event details. Provide a phone contact as well as an e-mail or Web page address.
- Use post-event publicity to celebrate your achievements, to acknowledge your volunteers and to recruit new volunteers for your next event.

## Create a flier

Publicize your event and produce a flier only after you have obtained all the required approvals and permits to use the intended site on the desired date. This will help you avoid having people show up at an event that never got off the ground due to lack of required approvals. Fliers are the most important way to inform the public about the details of your event.

### Your flier should include:

- Information on what will and will not be accepted
- Fees
- A site map
- Information on alternative recycling options
- Additional components of the event – cookies and coffee being served, handouts, etc?
- Acknowledgement of sponsors and partners

## Where to distribute and post fliers

Fliers can be reprinted or inserted in community newspapers and newsletters.

### Post fliers in areas such as:

- Local businesses. Ask to post fliers in their windows, and leave some for distribution.
- Community bulletin boards located in neighborhood gathering places
- Area library branches, community centers, schools and churches; ask local schools and churches if they will mention your event, or print your flier, in their newsletters
- Online. Design the flier to be easily sent electronically as an Acrobat PDF file. If partner and local organizations have Web sites, request that they include your flier, or a link to it, on their site.

## Write articles and press releases

- Send articles about your event to recruit volunteers. You can write articles on the recycling businesses or reuse agencies you are partnering with, or about recycling resources available in the region.
- Send press releases to large media outlets.

## Signage

Yard signs **like those used by political candidates** can be placed on busy corners and heavily traveled streets around the event (follow sign placement laws in your local jurisdiction). Signs should provide basic event information – such as date and time – and should include a contact number or Web site address for more information. Purchase yard signs with replaceable lettering that can be reused year after year.

- Banners can be hung a week or more before your event at or near the site.
- Ask local schools or other buildings with reader boards to advertise your event.
- “Sandwich boards” can be placed on strategic corners on the day of the event.

## Materials and haulers

The heart of a community cleanup is planning for opportunities for people to dispose of or recycle a variety of materials, and ensuring that hauling services are in place to take care of them.

## Line up your hauler

To find and hire a hauler – visit [www.popedouglasrecycle.com](http://www.popedouglasrecycle.com) or the yellow pages.

Coordinators emphasize the importance of getting a signed agreement or contract with your hauler that details fees and special service arrangements. The hauler serving your event has expertise and can be a great resource. Contact your hauler with questions about what materials to accept, how to handle certain types of waste and other issues. As you cultivate a relationship with a hauler, they may offer in-kind services, valuable feedback or other assistance.

**It is nearly impossible to predict how many people will attend your event or how much material and what type of material will be collected!**

Use information from past events or feedback from other event coordinators to estimate how many drop boxes you will need. Set a maximum number of boxes that you plan to fill and try to get assurance that the hauler will be able to provide what you need. For bulky waste and yard debris, 30- or 40-yard drop boxes are more suitable.

**Decide what materials you will accept**

Common materials typically accepted at neighborhood events range from furniture to tires and many items in-between.

**E-waste/Electronics**

**Appliances**

**Bulky waste or mixed waste** Furniture, mattresses, small appliances, bathtubs, sinks and other items that cannot fit into a garbage can are considered bulky waste. All can be accepted mixed, or can be sorted for reuse or recycling.

**Yard debris and wood waste** Woody yard debris and scrap lumber should at least be separated from other debris, and can be recycled at most facilities. Assign certain drop boxes for only wood waste and yard debris, and others for mixed waste.

**Scrap metal** This includes items such as old bed frames, broken tools, filing cabinets and screen doors. Metal should be placed in a designated drop box to ensure it is correctly recycled.

**Large appliances** Most are accepted with scrap metal (see above), but sometimes there are fees for appliances containing coolant (refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners).

Consider how appliances will be unloaded and moved and provide dollies and safety training.

**Tires**

**A few more words about metal**

If the hauler that is transporting your mixed waste also takes metal, they typically will take this load to a company that will purchase it. Ask the hauler to donate the cost of hauling the metal, and, if the load is sold, to donate the proceeds. You can also contact scrap metal recyclers directly. Some are willing to donate drop box and hauling services, and some may donate the proceeds from the sale of the contents as well.



**DANGER!**

Be on the lookout for propane tanks attached to grills, which are explosive and need to be dropped off with household hazardous waste. Also make sure that gas lawnmowers are drained before being included with mixed waste or scrap metal. Communicate these guidelines to customers and volunteers.

**During an event**

When you finally hold your event, the benefits of all the preparing and organizing in the “before” stage pay off.

With funding in place, volunteers on board and the site well planned, you’re ready to go.

- **Coordination.** During your event, having different people in charge of specific tasks will really help. As the coordinator, you just have one head and one pair of hands. **Rely on others to do their parts.**
- **Volunteers.** At this stage, your volunteers are critically important. They will help keep customers and material moving throughout the day, keep people in line happy and ensure that all receipts and records are tracked for later reconciliation.
- **Publicity.** The signs and banners you’ve created will help people put the right material in the right place. You will want to take pictures and gather some comments from customers and volunteers.

**Collect data**

- Use forms and processes that allow you to keep track of information for your sponsors and for planning future events.
- Collect and organize receipts. It is crucial to get receipts or “weight slips” from any facility accepting materials from your event.
- Recognize sponsors and donors. Include sponsor and donor logos or names on event signage and literature.

## Site planning and layout

- If applicable, have the approved permit available onsite the day of the event.
- Use cones, barricades and directional signs to control traffic flow. Check with local city public works departments (**City of Alexandria has a trailer full of traffic cones available for events**), your neighborhood association or other sponsors to see if they have this equipment available for your use – if not, it can be rented from traffic control equipment suppliers.
- Set up equipment according to your site map.
- Communicate the site plan to volunteers.
- Have copies of your site map available for volunteers handling customer reception and traffic flow.

## Customer reception

Your reception process allows you to:

- Collect information that may be required in reporting to your sponsors (such as numbers of customers and materials delivered)
- Collect fees
- Screen out unacceptable items. If the customer has questions about how to dispose of materials not accepted at your event, provide information about facilities accepting those items
- Let drivers know about any recycling or reuse opportunities.

## Volunteers

Volunteer training

Schedule your first shift of volunteers to arrive early enough to hold a training session on the day of the cleanup. Or, if possible, plan a brief volunteer training session during the week before the event. This early training can supplement, but should not replace on-site training. Make sure that your volunteers know that they should arrive prepared for **hard and dirty work and for possible bad weather**.

Pair up those ending a shift with an arriving volunteer for on-the-job training. Overlapping shifts will make sure there is enough time for those leaving a shift to train and update those beginning a shift.

### On-site volunteer training should include:

- Thanks to volunteers for coming
- Why your project is important and its goals
- Volunteer sign in and release/waiver signing
- Schedule for the event, including breaks
- Site plan review, including location of drop boxes, recycling areas, restrooms, refreshments, etc.
- Volunteer roles and responsibilities
- Distribution of shirts, safety vests, equipment, etc.
- To whom volunteers should go to with questions
- Review of safety and emergency procedures.

### Materials and haulers

- Train volunteers how to sort all materials.
- Walk the site at the beginning of the day with volunteers and share the site plan, showing what material should be delivered where.
- Use signs, banners and printed materials to reinforce instructions on “what goes where.”
- Have greeters inform customers about material sorting as they arrive.
- Load drop boxes safely. Fill back section to the top; middle section to the top; front section to top. Never throw materials over the sides of the drop box.
- Request receipts and weight slips. If possible, have reuse and recycling businesses supply itemized receipts or weight slips.

## After an Event

Your event is over, **it was a wild success**, and you, your many volunteers and partners have diverted a lot of material from the landfill and created a **cleaner community**. However, it's not quite time to call it a day. There are a number of very important tasks that need to be done before you can wrap things up. The good news is that you've been so well organized all along the way that this stage should go well too.

- **Recordkeeping.** You'll need receipts and documentation to be reimbursed from the organizations that are funding your event. Good records also will help you plan for next year, since you'll have a sense of how many people came, what they brought and how much publicity you did.
- **Thanks.** You'll want to thank and acknowledge all those invaluable volunteers, sponsors and donors.
- **Publicity.** Your publicity efforts will pay off now too. Local newspapers – especially neighborhood association and community newspapers – are hungry for local news involving everyday people.
- **Celebrate.** This last stage can be the most satisfying. Be sure to celebrate your success, and give yourself – and everyone else who helped – a huge pat on the back.

## Complete reporting

- Gather and total receipts. Promptly submit expense reports, with receipts and any other required documentation, to all sponsoring agencies.
- Provide follow-up reports and statistics to sponsors as soon as data is available.
- Acknowledge and thank every sponsor and donor.

## Site planning and layout

- Clean the site thoroughly.
- Follow up with a thank you note to the property owner.

## Volunteers

Acknowledge and celebrate volunteers

- When possible, create a newsletter announcement thanking volunteers.
- Follow up with notes of thanks, by mail or e-mail, including data (if available) on the impact of volunteers' efforts (diversion rates, tonnage) and highlighting memorable aspects of the event.
- Inform volunteers of future/repeat events and ask them to take part as planners and/or onsite volunteers.
- Ask them to refer others to volunteer at future events.

## Publicity

Use post-event publicity to celebrate your achievements, to acknowledge your volunteers and to recruit new volunteers for your next event.

- Write articles. Articles for community media outlets should highlight what was accomplished. If your event is annual, use articles to discuss planned improvements and to begin to recruit volunteers for next year. Also include information about where collected materials were sent, how much was diverted from the landfill and other examples of the event's achievements in minimizing its environmental impact.
- Thank sponsors, partners and volunteers. Take every opportunity to express appreciation for those who made it possible.

## Materials and haulers

- Collect and report data. Based on information from reuse and recycling businesses, calculate your "diversion rate," or how much material you were able to keep out of the landfill. Include this information in post-event publicity and reporting to sponsors and partners.
- Publicize accomplishments.

Community Cleanup Guidelines crafted from:

[http://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2012\\_community\\_cleanup\\_guide.pdf](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2012_community_cleanup_guide.pdf)