

Partners in Parks program

Short-term stewardship activity: Litter cleanup in a park

Help remove litter. See the difference your efforts can make!

Lend a helping hand by removing litter from your neighbourhood park in Waterloo. If you are 18 years of age or older, review the information below and register your group's litter cleanup activity a minimum one month in advance using the online form. A brief orientation session is provided to the group leader when picking up supplies.



Time and place

- public parks and trails in Waterloo (view City of Waterloo's [online map](#))
- May to October – carry out a litter cleanup through our [Partners in Parks program](#) or during our annual city-wide event on the last weekend in April ([Earth Day Community Cleanup in a park](#))
- no statutory holidays, daylight hours only (1 hour before sunset and 1 hour after sunrise)

Group leader responsibilities

Meet group participants at your starting location and follow these guidelines:

- ensure participants are wearing personal protective equipment and use acceptable tools
- collect signed waivers (Informed Consent Agreement) from each adult participant
- review map showing park boundaries and safety guidelines (see reverse) with participants

After the event:

- leave full garbage bags and large items *beside* existing garbage cans at the park entrance to avoid overflowing cans (exception: if only a small bag is collected, place inside the can)
- use the provided clear bag or your own blue bins to collect *clean* and empty recyclables; deposit with your household curbside collection
- within 24 hours, complete the online Community Cleanup results form so that garbage can be removed promptly and any dangerous items responded to (link provided)
- return participant waivers via email or drop off in a labelled envelope to the Waterloo Service Centre, 265 Lexington Crt from Monday to Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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Safety guidelines

All participants involved in a community litter cleanup activity through the City of Waterloo's Partners in Parks program must review and understand the safety guidelines outlined below:

- wear personal protective equipment (PPE) including closed-toe footwear, cloth gloves, long pants/sleeves and any additional PPE which may be advisable or appropriate for the conditions
- use the provided supplies: large "Only cure for litter is you" red garbage bags, clear bag for recyclables and cloth gloves; your own plastic garbage nippers and blue bins are acceptable
- this activity requires moderate physical exertion such as bending, lifting up to 20 lbs and walking on uneven terrain and within natural areas
- be aware of potential risks in natural areas such as uneven ground, branch/tree failure, exposure to stinging insects or plants (e.g. giant hogweed, stinging nettle, poison ivy), and unstable or slippery ground near wetlands, creeks and stormwater management ponds
- suspend activities when weather conditions become inclement (e.g. thunderstorms)
- only pick-up litter - leave organic matter such as leaves, twigs, tree limbs and other plant material on the ground
- **avoid** picking up dangerous or heavy, large items and record them on the results form:
 - **Sharps** include any device having rigid corners, edges or projections capable of causing a cut, puncture or abrasion. Sharps include but is not limited to hypodermic needles/syringes, blades, pointed edged tools, knives, scalpels, probes, sharp metal, broken glass or clinical glass (possibly contaminated with blood, bodily fluids or chemicals)
 - **hazardous waste** - items that are corrosive, flammable, explosive or poisonous including paint products and coatings, asbestos, fluorescent tubes and bulbs, automotive-type fluids, batteries, propane tanks, medical waste, pressurized containers, garden and pest control products, smoke alarms, chemicals and flammable liquids
 - farm/agricultural debris, large items that are heavy, bulky, difficult to grasp or unstable

What to do with needles, graffiti or gathering places:

On the online Community Cleanup results form, indicate any dangerous items including active or abandoned campsites/shelters/forts so that trained City staff can address these concerns.

- if you find a **needle** in a city park, contact the City @ 519-886-1550 (during business hours) or sharpscleanup@waterloo.ca immediately. View our [Safe needle disposal webpage](#).
- report any **graffiti** on park infrastructure (signs, playgrounds, benches, picnic tables, other structures) to the City @ 519-886-2310 or complete the [Report an issue form](#)

