



Swinley Community Group Litter Picking Policy

Introduction and Scope

This policy provides guidance for all volunteers involved in litter collection activities. Its purpose is to ensure the activity is conducted safely and effectively, protecting the health of participants and the environment.

Health and Safety Guidelines

The safety and well-being of litter pickers are paramount. All participants must adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Hi-visibility vests and protective gloves must be worn at all times. Sturdy, appropriate footwear is also required.
- **Hygiene:** Avoid direct contact with litter. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitiser after the activity, especially before eating, drinking, or going to the toilet. Cover any cuts or abrasions with a waterproof plaster.
- **Manual Handling:** Use a litter picker tool to avoid repetitive bending and direct contact with waste. Do not overfill bags or attempt to lift items that are too heavy; lift with bent knees and a straight back if an item must be moved safely.
- **Supervision:** Children and young people under 18 must be supervised by a parent or an appointed, responsible adult with parental permission.

Prohibited Items and Materials

For safety reasons, certain items must not be handled by litter pickers:

- **Hazardous Waste:** Do not touch syringes, needles, broken glass (unless using a brush and shovel into a sturdy container), chemicals, unidentified canisters, or clinical waste.
- **Heavy/Bulky Items:** Large items, fly-tipping, or objects too heavy to carry comfortably should be left in place.
- **Other:** Do not attempt to move dead or live animals.

Action on Prohibited Items: If any hazardous or bulky items are found, record their exact location and report them immediately to the relevant authority (e.g., local council or event organiser) for specialist removal.

Location Restrictions and Road Safety

- **Public Areas:** Only litter pick in public areas or areas where you have obtained prior permission from the landowner.
- **Roads and Traffic:** Do not litter pick on the live carriageway, near railway lines, or on verges next to roads with speed limits exceeding 30mph to 40mph, as this is extremely dangerous. Work from wide footpaths or pavements and always face oncoming traffic when working alongside a road to stay aware of vehicles.

- **Wildlife:** Be mindful of wildlife and avoid disturbing animals that may be nesting, especially during spring and summer months (February to September).

Waste Disposal

- **Segregation:** Where possible, separate recyclable items (e.g., plastic bottles, cans) from general waste according to local guidelines.
- **Collection:** Place tied bags of litter next to a public bin for collection. If you have more than a few bags or are an organised group, coordinate with the local authority beforehand to arrange a specific collection point and time.
- **Avoid Fly-Tipping:** Never leave bags of rubbish in unapproved locations or next to full bins, as this is considered fly-tipping.

Reporting and Feedback

Participants are encouraged to report any incidents, equipment defects, or safety concerns to the event organiser immediately. Sharing the results (e.g., number of bags collected) can help monitor progress and impact.