



World Ocean Day

# Coastal and Inland Cleanup Guide

8 June | [WorldOceanDay.org](https://WorldOceanDay.org)

# Introduction

Plastic pollution in the ocean has become a global problem for both humans and marine life. Fortunately, people around the world have taken the initiative to help with solutions to this problem and so can you!

Youth have been playing an increasingly important role in celebrating World Ocean Day since its inception. They have organized cleanup events, garnered awareness, created advocacy campaigns, hosted competitions, and much more.

Though there are many youth and others involved around the world who care deeply for our ocean, there is still a need for more people to get involved with not only celebrating World Ocean Day, but also protecting and restoring the ocean. Youth should be at the forefront of the fight for a healthy blue planet and the species that call it home.

This guide has been specifically designed to help anyone plan and host a successful and impactful cleanup event. Whether you are a youth or an adult, if you live near a beach, river, or lake, everyone has the ability to make a change. Every ounce of single-use plastic prevention helps; even removing one piece of plastic from the ocean could save the life of an animal.

## Why cleanups are important

- Raise awareness about the damage being done to our environment by plastic pollution
- Help people take responsibility
- Reduce the amount of plastic pollution that reaches the ocean or harms wildlife
- Bring the problem of plastic pollution to the forefront of people's minds

## How cleanups have an impact

- Unite a community
- Help the environment and remove plastic pollution
- Protect wildlife by keeping their habitat free of harmful plastic
- Raise awareness of the negative effects of plastic pollution
- Inspire the community and its members to continue to make changes in their everyday lives to prevent plastic pollution and help with solutions

# What is World Ocean Day?

World Ocean Day is an annual global celebration of our ocean that takes place every 8 June.

World Ocean Day raises the profile of the ocean, connects people worldwide, and inspires continuing action year-round to protect and restore our ocean.





# Pre-Cleanup

## Who, Where, & When

Dedicate a cleanup coordinator as well as the committee members organizing the cleanup. Set roles for each committee member.

Choose an environment that is in need of a cleanup. Consider the safety of the location and determine which areas of the site the cleanup would take place in.

### TIP:

It doesn't have to be a beach. Since all water eventually connects to the ocean, you can help by hosting an event by a stream, lake, pond, river, bay, or any other body of water. You can even host an underwater SCUBA cleanup!

Find out if other stakeholders have a pre-existing interest in your area. You can coordinate with others by seeing if there are any other organizations interested in cleanups in your local area.

### TIP:

Collaborate as much as possible. If someone is already hosting an event, try and host it together!

Choose a date that is ideally 8 weeks prior to the cleanup to ensure you will be able to organize it well. Make sure your event does not conflict with any special dates in your community so you can get as many people involved as possible.

### TIP:

Decide whether to set a backup date in case there is inclement weather on the actual day of the cleanup.

## Reach out to local officials

Although it varies between countries, contacting officials should be relatively the same process. It is important to check the laws in your region about hosting events, you may need a permit or some sort of official document to state that you are allowed to host an event in a public area. Consult local parks and recreation offices or your local police station, depending on where your cleanup will take place, to check if you need any of these documents when choosing a location.

### TIP:

Sometimes you can find all the information you need on an official website, but it is always good to be sure if you are uncertain about something.

When you are reaching out to the officials, it is a good idea to have a plan or brief overview of what you are trying to do. In this case, you may write an outline for your cleanup and who you are interested in hosting (general public, vendors, or organizations) in case they require a special license to sell goods, for example.



## Find Key Partners

This is where the phrase “think local, act global” really comes into play. When organizing your own cleanup, it is important to start with your local community. If you are in school, ask your teachers or fellow students. If you work in an office, ask your colleagues. Start with the people you are surrounded by on a regular basis and ask if they will help you plan a cleanup. Once you have a small group, you can start to ask bigger organizations to join your efforts.

### TIP:

Most organizations who have a social media page or website have their contact details accessible to the public. It is usually easier to send an email, if possible, to contact them about your cleanup. Make sure to contact them a couple of weeks before your event so they have time to answer back.

Start by telling them who you are and what your event is about in the first few lines. Next, explain what you would like them to do or how they can participate in your event, like setting up a stand with information about their organization and what they do to help the ocean.

Once you have reached out, be patient. Many organizations plan out their schedules in advance so don't be surprised if it takes a couple of days for them to reply. When they answer you, it is always a good idea to thank them for their consideration whether or not they are available to partner with you. In the case that they cannot participate, make sure to have some backup plans for other people you would like to have at your event and repeat the same process.

## Do your research

Scout your site in advance to get a better idea of how much litter the volunteers will be exposed to. You may want to document the amount of pollution to compare the site before and after the cleanup. Join the #trashtag challenge by taking a photo of the site before and after the cleanup and share them on social media!

### TIP:

It's worth considering how your volunteers will get there (e.g. parking lot, bus stop) and if there are toilets nearby.

Check where you can set up your event. Once you have found a spot, reserve the facility or location where volunteers will meet the day of the cleanup. This central location will serve as the initial meeting place and the location where cleanup bags are brought for recycling or proper disposal.

## Recruit volunteers

Before you start to recruit, check your permits and ask authorities to see how many volunteers are recommended in case there is a limit. Depending on this, ask and encourage friends and family to participate, and post the information and a sign-up system on social media. You can spread the word by handing out flyers, putting up posters, posting on social media, and sending emails.

Anyone can assist in a cleanup project; zoo, aquarium, and museum visitors and members, employees of businesses, watershed, and other community associations, school groups, religious or spiritual-oriented groups, and universities and youth groups are examples of potential volunteer sources.

### TIPS:

- Be sensitive about mixed-age events: Schools tend to prefer school-only events, not putting their students in a mix with unknown adults or older youth.
- You may want to offer transportation (buses, vans, etc.) from a central meeting place.
- Youth, if under the age of 18, usually need permission from a parent or guardian and adequate supervision (one adult supervisor for every six children recommended) should be arranged.

## Promote your event

Promote your cleanup event! Advertise through social media, newspapers, local news stations, and by putting up flyers around your local area (ideal places could be schools, supermarkets, parks, local businesses, shopping centers, cafes, restaurants, and the site itself).

Create awareness that will increase people's interest in being part of the cleanup. Visit schools and community centers. Ask your participants to invite their families and friends. You can also have side activities like educational games or prizes to make it both fun and rewarding.

Use social media to spread the word by creating an Instagram account or Facebook page for your event. You can also incorporate contests! For example, win a prize if you post the best photo of you cleaning the ocean and tag #WorldOceanDay.

## Get ready for the big day!

Once you have an idea of the number of people attending the cleanup, start to create work teams and site captains. Nobody should work alone. All group members, whether students or adults, should always work in teams of two or more. Site captains should be assigned to coordinate teams on the day of the cleanup. Make sure you know who the site captains are and make sure they know what they are responsible for.

Time to gather materials! Now that you know the approximate amount of people attending, you need to calculate how much material you will need and start collecting it. Most of the materials needed can be found online or at your local store.

Provide site captains and cleanup crews with the following:

- Work/gardening gloves or rubber dishwashing gloves (that can ideally be reused)
- Large clear bags and boxes for recyclables
- “Sharps” containers in case sharp items such as needles are located (optional and only for use by adults)
- Rakes, shovels, and/or litter poles
- Flagging tape (optional)
- Datasheets (to record all litter found by type and number), which can be provided to coordinating body for analysis and highlighted for any press outreach. OR a smart phone to use the Litterati app as an easier option (more on this later)
- Maps: a map of each team’s assigned cleanup section, and a roadmap of the route between their cleanup section and the meeting place
- Make sure everyone brings water in reusable bottles and snacks
- Sunscreen and first aid kits including hand sanitizer

At the central meeting place, set up deposit bins:

- Recycle bins
- Landfill bins (anything that cannot be recycled)
- Compost bins
- Liquids (to empty bottles)

Optional - be sure to make arrangements with local municipalities for proper disposal

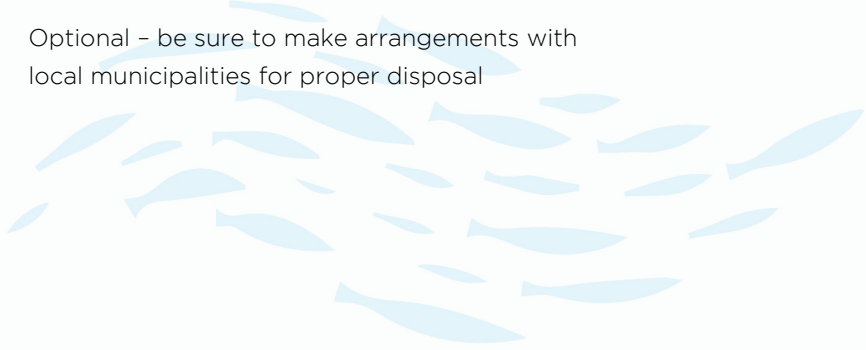
Organize a food and water re-fill station with at least 2 people running it. Encourage volunteers to bring their own water bottles and provide steel or paper cups. Food can either be free or you can sell it (but then remind volunteers to bring money) and use the money to refund the cost of materials.

Remember to purchase or sell food and beverages that are free of single-use plastic. It’s important that all packaging, bottles, and cutlery are as sustainable as possible, in line with the event’s dedication to prevent plastic pollution.

### TIP:

If you sell food, you can also donate any profits to ocean conservation groups to make an even greater impact!

A few days prior to the cleanup, send out a reminder email to all volunteers with the date, time, address, and what to bring and wear. Post this information on social media, too.



# Day of the Cleanup

On the day of the cleanup, get there early to set up. Ask all site captains to come early as well so they can familiarize themselves with their site and can guide the volunteers when they arrive.

Provide a sign-in sheet for volunteers at the central meeting place on the day of the cleanup. Project supervisors can then introduce the site captains, brief the volunteers on how to separate recyclable litter from non-recyclable litter, assign cleanup sections with starting points, list project supervisors in case of emergency, mention any particular hazards, and help site captains form cleanup teams.

## TIP:

Hazards should also be noted during training – all volunteers should wear gloves at all times and volunteers should be cautioned about picking up glass and other hazardous materials.

## Documenting the Event

Take pictures and videos with your phone and ask your cleanup team to do the same.

We suggest that you use the Litterati app:

**Litterati** is an app available on all platforms, that allows you to easily snap, tag and record trash in the environment. Once you find an area covered in litter, open the app and start by clicking the camera icon at the bottom of the screen. After taking the photo of a single piece of litter, watch it automatically upload to the Digital Landfill. Now that you've taken your first photo, choose from a list of tags or type your own to label what you found! Tagging is the most important action you can take to help make a difference!

Join the World Ocean Day club by selecting the more button at the bottom of the screen and then the club button on the upper right. When given the option, select the join a club button and search for "World Ocean Day." Once you are a part of the club, you can see how well the other global members of the "World Ocean Day" club are doing!

The app is a great way to spread awareness! It allows you to document polluted areas within your community and see what other people in your local area are doing to reduce pollution.

Join the Litterati community in cleaning the planet one piece of litter at a time! It's easy – simply snap, tag and dispose! To learn more about Litterati, visit the website: [www.litterati.org](http://www.litterati.org)

## Safety

Let's keep everyone safe and happy!

- It is useful to ask volunteers to wear gloves when participating in a cleanup or for the organizer to provide them, especially when picking up glass and tin
- It is also prudent to remind the volunteers to bring a hat, sunscreen, and water

As mentioned earlier, the organizer needs to make volunteers aware of potential physical danger. If the cleanup area is known for dangerous activity or rough terrain, perhaps ask for a police presence and/or first-aid certified volunteers at the cleanup.

## Properly Dispose of the Litter

There are several options of what you can do with the litter that you have collected. Try and be creative, this is only a guide so use your imagination.

## Recycle

- Get a team of volunteers to separate the litter into plastic, paper, glass, tin, and non-recyclables
- When the items have been sorted, they can be taken to the local recycling center, where available, and disposed of responsibly
- TerraCycle is an innovative recycling company that has become a global leader in recycling hard-to-recycle waste. Consider signing up for one of their free programs by visiting their website at [terracycle.com](http://terracycle.com)

## Municipality

- Municipalities may be willing to pick up litter collected at beach cleanups, however, they need to be asked well in advance to collect it on a certain day and time

## Brand Challenge

- An innovative way to create accountability is to initiate inter-brand challenges. After the cleanup is complete, look at all of the litter collected and to see if any items are branded e.g. Coca Cola, single-use plastic bags from a local convenience store
- From this information, a social media campaign can be designed to ask these brands what they are doing about plastic pollution
- The purpose of this challenge is to get corporations to take responsibility for their products



## Post-Cleanup

### Celebrate!

Finish the cleanup and celebrate! Coming together at the end of the day is important. Cleanup volunteers can reconvene at the central meeting site by the assigned time for refreshments and rewards to help celebrate their accomplishments and get reinvigorated for a future cleanup.

### TIP:

If funds are available, it's always nice to give people a memento for their time and effort - whether that is an inexpensive button, a photo, reusable bag, or a t-shirt (check out the World Ocean Day merchandise - [worldoceanday.teemill.com](http://worldoceanday.teemill.com)).

### Analyze the Results

Document your work by taking a photo of the newly cleaned area! You will eventually compare your before and after photos and show volunteers their impact.

Organize collected data and create reports, graphs, and images to share on social media. Tell people about the amount collected. After all, sharing information is essential for raising awareness! Set up a meeting with the captains and volunteers to share how big of an impact they have made in the community. Share the results from Litterati after the event to update everyone on the impact they made and thank them for participating.

### Influence Policy

Get people to sign a document where they pledge to make changes in their lives to limit their personal use of single-use plastic. For example: "I pledge to stop using plastic straws and plastic shopping bags", "I pledge to buy vegetables that are not packaged in plastic", OR "I pledge to pick up litter I see in the streets and prevent it from reaching the ocean."

When the volunteers sign the pledge, you can use their email address to follow up after the event to ask how they are managing their commitment. This can be done through an online pledge to reach a greater audience or you can turn this into a social media campaign.

Share the pledge and Litterati data with local decision-makers to make a case for why single-use plastic should be banned in your community or why recycling infrastructure should be improved. The sky is the limit on what you can achieve!

## Initiatives Around the World

There are many activities being carried out around the world to clean our beaches and rid the ocean of plastics. Some of these activities are implemented by individuals while others are implemented by large bodies like government agencies, organizations, international NGOs, etc.

### The Clean Rivers Initiative

Initiatives can also be carried out through collaborations and partnerships like the Clean Rivers Initiative. The 'Clean Rivers' initiative is a collaboration between IVN, Plastic Soup Foundation, and Stichting De Noordzee to stop the flow of plastic through rivers at the source. The next five years these three organizations will not only clean up the riverbanks of the Meuse and Waal but will also, with the help of volunteers, start large-scale waste research. The goal of Clean Rivers is to gain more insight into the amounts, composition, and source of the waste along rivers.

# Initiatives (continued)

## The Clean Oceans Initiative

The Clean Oceans Initiative was launched by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and KfW Group, on behalf of the Government of Germany. The five-year initiative will support the development and implementation of sustainable projects to reduce pollution, particularly plastics, in the world ocean.

The three partners will provide €2 billion in long-term financing for projects to reduce marine litter, especially plastics, as well as untreated wastewater discharge. Projects will focus on four key areas: collection, pre-treatment and recycling of waste, particularly plastic, collected on land and from rivers and the ocean; improved waste management in harbors and ports to reduce marine litter from ships; and implementation of wastewater treatment plants to support reduction of plastics and other pollutants in rivers and the ocean. The projects will finance the collection, sorting, and recycling of waste before it reaches rivers and streams.

# Conclusion

It's important to remember that cleanups are just one part of the solution. In order to achieve a plastic-free future we must go to the source of the problem and stop the production of unnecessary single-use plastic items and packaging by opting for sustainable alternatives. It is going to take all of us working together in all sectors including corporate, political, and public to see the change that's needed to stop plastic pollution for good. By downloading this guide, you have proven that you take this problem seriously and are ready to be part of the solution!

## TOGETHER WE CAN PROTECT AND RESTORE THE OCEAN!

Use the Hashtag #WorldOceanDay  
See you on 8 June.

This guide was developed by the World  
Ocean Day Youth Advisory Council

Patricia Zanella (Brazil)

Isabelle Grace (Switzerland)

Olivia Livingstone (Liberia)

Olivia Taylor (South Africa),

Sofia El-Rass (Denmark)

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