Troop 51 Mulch Day Best Practices

We deliver mulch. A lot of mulch. The sooner we get it all delivered, the sooner we can all get to our ibuprofen, heating pads, ice, and beverage of choice. In that vein, I’ve solicited input from some overly-efficient drivers from the last three years and consolidated it here for your consideration.

The items below (except safety) are for consideration. At the end of the day it’s the Driver’s truck – they get the last word.

Now, over to the experts….

# Safety

Safety is efficient. If we don’t do things safely, it’ll take forever and really, really suck. So safety is number one. That means people, equipment, and neighborhoods are never jeopardized.

Remind scouts to be careful and watchful, especially when moving in streets

Scouts must use the buddy system at all times. Do NOT go anywhere alone

Do not enter anyone's home.

Be aware of pets, specifically dogs. Before opening gates, get permission.

Stay hydrated. Make sure scouts have water on all runs.

# Driver – in charge of the truck

Driver checklist before leaving on a route:

* Strap check
* Receipts
* Strap bar (breaker bar)
* Route sheet
* Verify the proper number of loose bags (see route sheet)
* Everyone has water

Back the truck in as close as possible to shorten walking distance, especially on large count houses.

Choose a competent adult to help direct you when backing down a long driveway or pipestem. Have the same adult doing this for consistency. Let them know they need to look for high & low things, or moving things like scouts. Still use mirrors & look around a lot.

The driver should be responsible for the breaker bar that reduces the strap tension - that way the bar doesn't get lost.

Upon arrival, quickly unfasten the tie down for the pallet(s) to be unloaded.

Look ahead to see if a pallet will be emptied on a delivery. If so, unstrap the pallet stack at the back of the truck and rollup/fold the tie down for that pallet immediately.

Drivers and navigators haul mulch too – you’re not just pretty faces.

As you get close to finishing a delivery, stop hauling mulch and start readying the truck for roll out. The driver is responsible for making sure the truck bed is safe to move on to the next delivery, which includes ensuring pallets/debris are safely secured, and unused pallet straps are rolled up on drums or are folded.

Once the last delivery is unloaded head back immediately to prepare truck for next delivery run. You can leave the scouts to finish up any last minute counting and receipt drop off. Take one car in case something happens on the way back. Leave at least two adults (two deep leadership).

Provide feedback to the route planner for next year.

# Navigator – in charge of the unloading

Check to see where the upcoming deliveries are and deliver "out of order" if it seems more efficient.

Fill out the thank you receipts while driving to the next destination(s) so the team is not waiting for that to be completed.

Coordinate unloading – get people moving and make the final call on who does what. See next section.

Tell everyone how many bags are needed when you pull up to a house.

If there are houses on both sides, do them at the same time (except for busy streets). Especially true if one of the houses has a small number of bags

Track the duct tape or entrust it to one of the unloaders. Make one person responsible for it.

Drivers and navigators haul mulch too – you’re not just pretty faces.

As you get close to finishing a delivery, stop hauling mulch and plan the next delivery.

Provide feedback to the route planner for next year.

# Unloading

Use adults (or really energetic/large scouts) on the truck taking down mulch from the pallets and handing them off. Safety & efficiency are the 2 biggest reasons. Pick adults that would hustle on the truck jobs since that seemed to be a bottleneck. Use 2 to 4 adults to unload, depending on how well they work together. If they start getting in each other’s way, remove one.

All unloaders should have knives to cut open pallets.

Unloaders should have the duct tape ready for broken bags.

By the time the unloaders are ready, the scouts should be lined up and waiting for bags. The unloaders should be the bottleneck. Navigators – enlist the scout-ferrying parents to shoo scouts along if they are slow to get ready.

Unload off both sides of the truck and the side & rear of the truck, when that is safe to do. The crew on the ground sort of made a line or 2 lines to receive a mulch bag then carry it to drop off then get back in line for the next bag.

Have a younger scout counting delivered bags as they are dropped off. Have a 2nd person (a mom?) to double check. 5 bags to a stack works well for the counters. This person should be loud and able to tell everyone how close to finished they are - make sure to cut unloading off at the truck to avoid extra work returning bags to the truck

As pallets are emptied, stack them neatly and tie them down on the back of the truck, usually by the driver or an adult on the truck. The neat stack makes unloading them quicker for the yard crew. The driver should tie these down.

# Logistics

If the next delivery address was a short distance away (within 4-5 houses) have the scouts walk. Navigator should tell the crew to walk or load up to get to the next place.

Don’t waste any extra time back at the church. As soon as the truck is reloaded, head out.

The efficiency of the yard crew is critical in helping to get trucks back out quickly.

Have the scout-ferrying adults keep the scouts safely away from the truck when it’s in motion.