



San Diego Coastkeeper's Beach Cleanup in a Box *“Do It Yourself Manual”*



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Do It Yourself Manual

Thank you for taking the time to participate in a beach cleanup! Your efforts help keep our coastal areas clean and healthy.

Follow these simple guidelines to ensure a successful cleanup



Photo: Sundar Karthikeyan

The Importance of Beach Cleanups

San Diego County has some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, yet we continue to find trash on even the cleanest beaches. This trash is not only bad for tourism, but poses threats to both the health of beach goers and the marine environment. If this debris is not removed it will eventually enter the ocean, becoming marine debris that threatens ocean ecosystems. In fact, **marine debris** is one of the worst pollution problems facing the world's oceans.



Photo: NOAA

The problem with marine debris is that most of it is in the form of plastic, which is highly toxic and does not degrade naturally.

Some plastic items, such as plastic bags, can remain in the ocean for up to 1000 years. This [plastic debris](#) is very harmful to the marine animals that mistake it for food or get tangled in it and can cause serious injury or death by suffocation or entrapment.

Each piece of [marine debris](#) has a person's hand behind it, with up to 80 percent of plastic debris in the ocean coming from a land-based source through our [watersheds](#). It is critical that the debris found on the beaches and in the streets is removed before it pollutes the ocean. Through your beach cleanup you are not only removing this unsightly and dangerous debris which plagues our beautiful beaches, you are helping to spread the word about one of the most extensive pollution problems facing our world today. With your help we can reduce marine pollution! To learn more about marine debris visit the San Diego Coastkeeper® web site at www.sdcoastkeeper.org.



Photo: Ocean Conservancy

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How to Coordinate a Beach Cleanup

Planning a Cleanup:

- Pick a date, time, and location for your cleanup
- Choose a location in need of a cleanup
- Plan where volunteers will meet
- Find a site that has convenient parking
- Know who to contact in case of an emergency
- Familiarize yourself with hazardous areas to be avoided
- Know what to do when hazardous items (like syringes and waste drums) or injured animals are found. See "Safety Fact Sheet."
- Check the availability of restrooms on site
- Check the availability and location of trash and recycling on-site.
- Speak with lifeguards and/or park rangers before cleanup so they are aware you will be conducting a cleanup on your chosen date and time.
- Organize friends, co-workers and/or family to join you



Photo: © Matthew Meier Photography

Picking Up Supplies:

- Provide San Diego Coastkeeper® with the total number of your group
- **All volunteers must fill out and sign a Liability Waiver.** Any volunteer under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian sign the waiver before participating. Waivers will be provided in your cleanup box and can be found on the San Diego Coastkeeper® website at: <http://www.sdcoastkeeper.org/images/stories/Coastkeeper-Surfrider-Cleanup-Waiver-2011.pdf>
- Arrange to pick up your supplies from the San Diego Coastkeeper® office in Point Loma
 - 2825 Dewey Road, Suite 207, San Diego, CA 92106
- Pack any other materials you might need
- Encourage your volunteers to bring their own supplies (like gloves and/or buckets for trash) to reduce the waste generated at your cleanup. If your volunteers "bring their own," be sure to take pictures and email them to cleanups@sdcoastkeeper.org, so that we can recognize your group in our promotional materials.

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Day of Cleanup:

- Arrive at your cleanup site early so you are ready to collect waivers, sign up volunteers and hand out supplies.
- Set up table and any signage.
- Have your volunteers form groups of 2-5 people. Groups can share bags and data cards.
- Hand out supplies. **One glove** per person, **one bag** and **one data card** per group. It is important to make sure volunteers are not taking more supplies than necessary; you do not want to create excess trash. Let volunteers know they are welcome to use trash grabbers also.
- Explain the procedure for **filling out data cards**. Stress the importance of filling out the cards accurately. See "Information Sheet."
- Give safety talk. See "Safety Fact Sheet."
- Point out any hazardous locations to be avoided.
- Remind volunteers that they should not pick up natural items (such as algae, kelp, driftwood, shells, etc.) these items are a part of the ecosystem you are trying to restore.
- Decide how long you will clean the beach and remind your volunteers what time to arrive back at the meeting point with their trash. Make sure volunteers know to bring back trash so that it can be weighed.
- Direct volunteers to remove trash from the streets near the beach, as well as from the beach, so this trash does not make its way onto the beach and eventually into the ocean.
- Start your cleanup!
- During cleanup, people may ask why you are out cleaning the beach. Be sure to talk about the importance of removing debris from the beach before it reaches the ocean and please mention San Diego Coastkeeper®'s role in protecting our coast.
- Take photos of your cleanup.

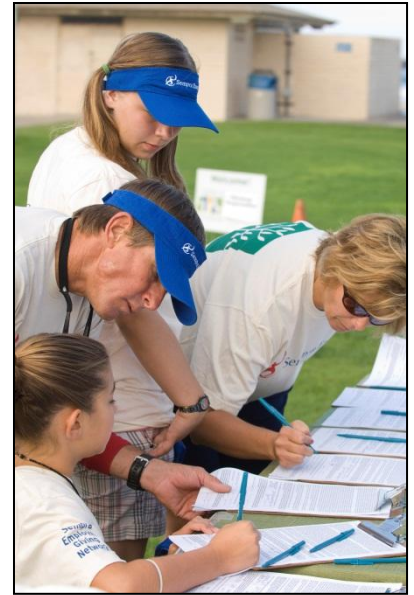


Photo: © Matthew Meier Photography



Photo: Sundar Karthikeyan

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After cleanup:

- Collect trash from volunteers.
- Collect data cards.
- Make sure all trash grabbers are returned.
- Weigh trash and record your results on the data sheet.
- Collect all supplies and plan to return them to the SDCK office on the day and time you arrange when you picked up your supplies.
- Send your favorite photos to Coastkeeper electronically at cleanups@sdcoastkeeper.org and include photo credit, along with permission to use the photo. Photos may be included on the Coastkeeper Flickr page and other Coastkeeper materials.
- Become a member of San Diego Coastkeeper®, if you are not already. Your membership will help support San Diego's clean water advocates. Membership forms are in your box or you can join online at: <http://www.sdcoastkeeper.org/give/san-diego-coastkeeper-membership.html>



Photo: © Matthew Meier Photography

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Information Sheet

Locations for Cleanups

Determine a location for your cleanup ahead of time. Keep in mind parking, beach access and trash disposal availability.

Picking up and Returning Supplies

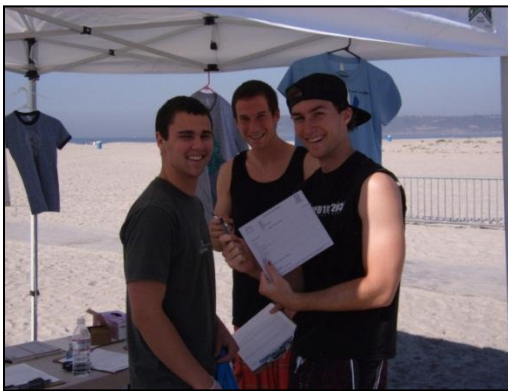
After finalizing the total number of volunteers helping with your cleanup, contact the Marine Debris Coordinator at (619) 758-7743, ext. 115 or cleanups@sdcoastkeeper.org to inform us of your volunteer count. Inform us of a date and time for picking up and returning supplies. Please plan to pick up your box **1-3 days before** and return your supplies **1-3 days following your cleanup**. Make sure you have room in your car for a large box (approx. 3.5 to 4 feet in length and 2 feet deep).

Equipment Conditions

Cleanup supplies are expected to be returned after use. Cleanup coordinators are responsible for providing \$20 for lost or unusable scales, \$10 for each lost or unusable trash grabber, and \$5 for unreturned clipboards. Please contact the Coastkeeper office with questions or concerns regarding this policy.



Photo: David Maung Photography



Filling Out Data Cards

Make sure each group receives a data card before the cleanup and understands the greater significance of their beach cleanup data collection. We use the data gathered with these cards to lobby for policy change and educate our community.

- One person can be in charge of the data card for each group of 2-5 during the cleanup.
- Inform your volunteers that there are data collection instructions on the card and tell the recorder to familiarize themselves with the items on the card before the cleanup.
- As debris is picked up, a tally mark should be made on the data card in the correct category. When filling out the cards, count items in groups of five (as shown on the card) and record the total number in the box provided.
- Do not write words like "lots" or "many." Use tally marks only!
- Tally all the data cards at the end of the cleanup. Note any unusual items found during the cleanup.

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Safety Fact Sheet

1. Do not go near any large drums or barrels.
2. Wear gloves and closed-toe shoes at all times, as well as protection from the sun, such as a hat and sun-block.
3. *Stay away from any ecologically fragile areas (e.g. sand dunes, nesting areas, sensitive plants).*
4. Don't lift anything too heavy; when in doubt, don't try!
5. **Don't touch or pick up dead animals, or attempt to move injured animals.** Make your cleanup captains or a lifeguard aware of the animals and where they are located.
6. Don't pick up syringes, needles, or any sharp objects. Mark the area and notify the cleanup captain or lifeguard of their location.
7. Make sure that fire pits are cold before reaching into them.
8. Always stay in teams of at least two.
9. Avoid over-exertion, sunburn, heat exhaustion, and dehydration. When in doubt, come in early.
10. If cleaning on or near streets please be on the look out for cars and proceed with caution.
11. Children should always be supervised by an adult.



Photo: San Diego Coastkeeper

Emergency Contact Numbers

Injured Marine Animal - Sea World: (800) 541-7325

Other Injured Wildlife (Birds etc.): (619) 225-9453

Dead Animal*: (619) 390-8204

Hazardous Items*: (858) 694-7000

*note: These numbers are for locations within the City of San Diego

The Dirty Facts about Plastic

Here are some of the dirty facts about marine debris:

- ◆ More than 60 percent of marine debris is comprised of plastic material. Up to 80 percent of marine debris comes from land-based sources. Due to its durability, buoyancy, and ability to absorb and concentrate toxins present in the ocean, plastic is especially harmful to marine life and the humans who use the marine life as a food source.
- ◆ Some of the main types of plastic litter found are cigarette butts (the filter is comprised of plastic), food wrappers and take-out containers, plastic bottles, cups, lids, caps, forks, spoons and knives, plastic bags, balloons, fishing line and six-pack holders.
- ◆ The Pacific Ocean is home to an area of plastic soup spanning twice size of the United States known as the "Garbage Patch." This patch is growing at an alarming rate and is a huge feeding ground for many marine animals. Plastics from this patch have been traced to sources all over the world, including the United States and Mexico.
- ◆ The biggest problem with plastics is that they DO NOT biodegrade. Plastics break down in a process called photodegrading, which means they simply break apart into ever smaller pieces, eventually forming "plastic dust." Through this process they release toxins which have many harmful effects to the ocean.
- ◆ According to a recent study by [Algalita Marine Research Foundation], in certain parts of the Pacific plastics in the ocean currently outweigh natural zooplankton by a 46:1 ratio! Fish and other sea animals mistake plastics for food because plankton and plastic, when broken down or in pellet form, have very similar appearances.
- ◆ Studies show that there are 46,000 pieces of plastic litter floating on every square mile of the ocean.
- ◆ Shoppers worldwide are using 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags per year. This translates to about a million bags every minute across the globe. Plastic bags take 20 to 1000 years to break down, are made from petroleum, a nonrenewable resource, and they are very harmful to marine animals that ingest them.
- ◆ More than 1 million birds and more than 100,000 whales, seals and turtles, and countless fish worldwide are killed by plastic debris each year. These deaths occur through entanglement, suffocation and starvation by ingestion.

Be part of the solution:

- ◆ **Support San Diego Coastkeeper. For more information on membership visit our web site at www.sdcoastkeeper.org and click on "give".**
- ◆ Bring your own cloth or recycled grocery bags to the store instead of using plastic or paper one-time use bags.
- ◆ Reduce, Reuse then Recycle! Buy in bulk. Re-use when possible. Reduce consumption by avoiding excessively packaged products.
- ◆ Seek alternatives to "disposable" products. (They really aren't disposable and represent a massive waste of the world's resources.) If you must buy disposable buy paper instead of plastic.
- ◆ Avoid buying bottled water, use reusable bottles. Go to your local grocery store and refill your water jugs.
- ◆ Keep plastic debris and other contaminants (leaves, pet waste, toxins) out of street gutters and storm drains. This eventually ends up in the ocean.
- ◆ Keep beaches and coastal and inland waterways clean.
- ◆ Get involved! Participate in beach cleanups if you live in a coastal area.
- ◆ Educate yourself and think about where each product you buy will end up when you are finished with it!

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Supply Checklist

Items in Boxes:

- ☐ BCU in a Box "Do it Yourself" Manual
- ☐ Trash Bags
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Liability Waiver Forms
- ☐ Marine Debris Data Cards
- ☐ Clip Boards
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Trash Grabbers
- ☐ Scale
- ☐ First Aid Kit
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer

Additional Items you may want to bring:

- ☐ Digital Camera
- ☐ Snacks/coffee
- ☐ Tape, Scissors, Clipboards, Markers, Paper and Paperweights
- ☐ Sign describing which items are recyclable
- ☐ Calculator (to help tally totals)
- ☐ Party Supplies (if applicable)
- ☐ Chair
- ☐ Table

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Beach Cleanup Tips

Ways to reduce the amount of waste generated at your beach cleanup:

- 1) Ask volunteers to bring their own gloves and buckets if they have them to minimize our cleanup's waste and comply with San Diego Coastkeeper®'s "Bring Your Own" campaign.
- 2) Provide drinking water from a cooler rather than from single use plastic bottles.
- 3) Encourage volunteers to bring their own **reusable** water bottles.
- 4) Recycle all plastic, glass and aluminum bottles and cans found during the cleanup.
- 5) Provide one trash bag per group (not per person).
- 6) Only provide one glove per person.
- 7) If providing food for volunteers, buy food locally and with minimal packaging.
- 8) Will not leave any trash at cleanup location.

Remember, you are at the beach today in an attempt to remove marine debris and restore the natural coastal ecosystem. Reduce the amount of trash generated in the process and you will have completed a successful cleanup!