

Planning a Community Clean-up

ToolTip #17
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A well organized community clean up can be fun! In addition to improving the appearance of a neighborhood, a community cleanup can be a great opportunity to get to know other residents. The following are some ideas that you might want to consider.

1. Location! Location! Location!



- Take a look at your neighborhood and target an area that has the greatest need or where a cleanup might have the greatest impact. If there are several areas, prioritize them.
- Define the boundaries of a target cleanup area and plan on allocating dumpsters there.
- Identify problem owners in the area and try to enlist their help.

2. A Cleanup can be a social event too!

- Enroll volunteers from the Neighborhood Association as well as local Parent Teacher Organizations or churches.
- Be sure to have a game plan to encourage participation. Define tasks so that people have a "mission". (If people aren't clear on what they are doing, they may not do anything.)
- At the end of the cleanup, have some kind of concluding event. Consider a hot dog lunch, ice cream social, or a potluck. Or maybe just a fun "ceremony".
- Use a Polaroid camera to take before/during/after pictures and post them on a board for volunteers to see. At the end, individuals take them home.
- Give awards or prizes - maybe for the most things carried, the funniest item thrown into the dumpster, or anything else you can think of. One Association provides door prizes as an incentive for kids. Each time they turn in a bag of trash, they get a raffle ticket. At the end of the cleanup, prizes are raffled off and they feast on hot dogs.



3. Scheduling:



- A cleanup can be a onetime event or an activity that continues, possibly moving from one location to another. If you have defined several priority targets, you may want to use one or two dumpsters in one area and schedule other cleanups for different areas.
- Typically Neighborhood Cleanup events are held on Saturday mornings. Early notification to residents in targeted areas is imperative. They need time prepare.
- Consider a dual dumpster approach, one on Saturday for residents and a clean-up crew followed by one on Monday morning or the next Saturday for the "left overs".

4. Set realistic goals!



- Success is important. Make sure that the area you are cleaning up is "doable" with the volunteers you have. Scale your effort down if fewer people turn out than expected.

5. Once clean, make sure it stays that way!

- Develop a strategy to ensure that the area stays clean. Get a commitment from the local property owners and set up a Neighborhood Association committee that is responsible for follow-up in that targeted area.



Task List for a Cleanup

The following is a checklist for an organized cleanup of a targeted area.

Prior to scheduling cleanup.

- Discuss potential target areas with Association members & set priorities.
- Determine schedule & identify key volunteers to organize the event.
- Notify Waste Management thirty days in advance to schedule dumpsters. Let staff know if there is any special information you want on the flyer. Staff will mail out flyers to all members of your Association and/or can provide flyers for the Association to distribute.

One or two months before cleanup

You may want to establish a subcommittee of key volunteers to do these tasks:

- Set specific boundaries for targeted cleanup area.
- Conduct a preliminary surveillance of the area to identify owners that are contributing to the problem.
- Personally contact owners contributing to the problem and ask them to participate. (If there are absentee owners, you can ask the renter neighbors to assist in finding the property owner's name and address.)
- Contact other organizations and enroll volunteers to help.

Two weeks before cleanup

- Send out notices of cleanup to targeted area & to volunteers (as a reminder).
- Collect needed supplies:
 - Trash bags.
 - Paint, brushes, & cleanup supplies if doing graffiti removal.
 - Brooms, shovels, etc.
 - Ask neighbors or volunteers for wheel barrels.
 - Special items such as refreshments, prizes, camera & film, etc.
- Develop a list of tasks that need to be assigned & identify volunteers to oversee each task.

Day of cleanup

- Make sure dumpsters are watched per instructions by disposal company.
- Have fun!!!!