

## LITTER PICKING: ADVICE FOR VOLUNTEERS

### 1. Introduction

This guidance gives basic information to help volunteers understand what hazards they may face and how they should deal with these.

### 2. Being Prepared

Personal safety items: you will need heavy-duty waterproof gloves, strong comfortable boots or shoes or waterproof clothing depending upon the weather.

If you are working near a highway, wear something conspicuous. The organiser will provide you with high visibility clothing if you are working near a busy road, but try to wear something bright or light coloured in any case.

Inoculations: do make sure that your tetanus inoculations are up-to-date

Children: most sites pose some danger to children. Children under 10 years old should not participate in litter picking events, and older children should be properly supervised, with a ratio of no more than 5 children to one adult being appropriate.

### 3. Collecting equipment

The organiser will ensure that you have adequate supplies of heavy duty refuse sacks and string or tape for sealing them. The organiser will also ensure that at least some volunteers have litter pickers, rakes or shovels to collect any items which could be hazardous.

### 4. Hazards to look for on the day

A number of sites are inherently hazardous. Pay particular care near busy roads, fast or deep flowing water, steep, slippery or unstable banks and derelict buildings.

Hazardous waste: you may find cans, drums or similarly containers. Do not assume that the contents match the label. If there is any suggestion the contents may be hazardous or that the container is leaking, leave the item where it is and mark it for later collection. Take especial care on beaches with short sea sewage outfalls, where there is a risk of infection from discharged material washed up on the shore.

Needles: under no circumstances should you touch hypodermic needles or other drugs related litter. Mark such litter clearly. The organiser will arrange for specialist removal.

Sharps: any sharp items should be retrieved with litter pickers or similarly tools and placed into a sharps bin or similar container. The organiser will make these available.

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Injuries: make sure you know where the first aid box is kept and who any first aiders are. Report all injuries, however minor, to the organiser.

Site Rules: the organiser will have established a number of site rules and told you about these in a safety briefing; make sure that you and any young people for whom you are responsible follows those rules.

## **5. Conclusion**

The vast bulk of the litter found on the Isle of Man poses very little threat to litter pickers. Litter picking can involve both hidden and obvious dangers, and volunteers are urged to follow the advice contained in this guidance at all times.

Organisers can obtain further guidance on these issues from the Health and Safety at Work Inspectorate, telephone no: 01624-685952 or email [WorkSafe@dlge.gov.im](mailto:WorkSafe@dlge.gov.im)