

Community Cleanup Event Guide

Prepared by Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Financial and Business Assistance

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I. Introduction

Community cleanup events provide an opportunity for residents to recycle and/or responsibly dispose of bulky, hazardous, electronic and other atypical waste items that potentially pose a threat to human health and the environment. This guide is a resource to assist in organizing your efforts.

II. Planning the Event

A. Staffing

1. Select a Coordinator

The Coordinator oversees all aspects in planning, organizing and executing the cleanup event. The Coordinator also serves as the primary contact during the event. The Coordinator may wish to assign people or committees to assist with these tasks.

2. Select a Field Coordinator

Although there is an overall coordinator for the Community Cleanup, it may be helpful to have a Field Coordinator, someone who knows the physical environment, is familiar with logistics and can assist the cleanup crews and city personnel the day of the event. The Field Coordinator surveys the cleanup site in advance to determine where materials should be received and the number of staff/volunteers needed for all aspects of the event.

3. Assign Other Staff if needed

Additional roles might include the following:

- Advance and post-event publicity coordinator and spokesperson.
- Recycling/Disposal coordinator.
- Transportation/Logistical coordinator/personnel.
- Specially trained personnel for hazardous materials collection.

4. Identify Potential Partnerships

Maximize potential recycling and reuse opportunities by identifying and approaching non-profits and other organizations that could potentially benefit from an organized collection effort. Example organizations might include Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity, Toys for Tots, etc.

B. Select a Location

1. Determine if your cleanup event will be a curbside event or if residents and/or businesses must deliver materials to a designated location within the community.
2. If it is determined that materials must be delivered to a designated location, ensure that the location is convenient for residents and that the location has supervision/oversight to ensure that illegal dumping does not take place before or after the event. Considerations when selecting a location should include local, state and federal regulations, space needs, surface area, lighting, traffic flow and supervision.

C. Set a Date for the Cleanup

Set a date and time for your event and determine if the event will be “rain or shine” or if it is necessary to set a rain date. When selecting a date and time for the event the following questions should be considered:

- How much time will be needed for setup?
- Weather conditions – what potential inclement weather conditions might need to be considered? Are event volunteer and staff members educated regarding safety measures that should be taken if inclement weather occurs?
- Are there scheduled community events that might conflict with your event (holidays, festivals, sports games, etc.)?

D. Determine What Materials Will Be Accepted

Community cleanups are typically events for collecting bulky, hazardous and electronic materials not routinely collected by waste haulers and/or confidential documents that need to be shredded before being recycled.

Organizers need to determine if the event will be a general cleanup event or if it will focus on a particular waste stream i.e. appliances, electronics, etc. In addition, organizers must ensure compliance with all federal, state and local regulations that apply to the waste streams selected.

Items residents have accumulated will generally fall into three categories:

1. Items that can be reused or recycled

Examples may include: furniture, carpet, appliances (these - including Freon containing items: refrigerator, freezer, dehumidifier and non-Freon items: stove, washer, dryer, dishwasher, microwave and water heater), electronics (computers, televisions, VCRs, DVDs), large metal items like grills or engines, wood and other construction materials, latex paint, bicycles. You will need to decide whether or not you will accept materials such as yard waste and items

that may be recycled at the curb (in some cities) or at drop-off location (in some cities) every day - plastic, glass, cans, paper and cardboard.

2. **Items that are broken or are unusable and must be landfilled**

Examples may include: furniture, mattresses, carpet, demolition materials and oversized items.

3. **Items that are hazardous and require special handling for disposal**

Examples may include: toxic household items such as oil based paints and stains, pool chemicals, garden chemicals, spray paints, cleaners and more. If you decide to accept hazardous materials at this event, you must make arrangements for *specially trained staff with equipment to be on site*.

Note - never underestimate the reuse potential of things that may be collected - one person's junk is another's treasure! Will you allow scavenging – people going through the pile of delivered items/material?

Allowing materials to be adopted by others may assist in reduction of disposal costs. **Safety must be considered.** *Consider having a material swap day or garage sale weekend before the cleanup event. Activities such as these may result in avoided disposal costs.*

E. **Determine How Materials Will be Collected**

Things to consider:

1. What types of containers and hauling vehicles are available? *Note- Items going to the landfill and items being recycled should be in separate clearly marked containers (check with recycler to meet their requirements).
 - a. Dump Truck
 - b. Flat Bed Trailer
 - c. Roll Off Container
 - d. Gaylord Containers
2. Where will the containers need to be delivered and when do they need to be delivered?
3. Who will haul dumpster or rolloffs, and when is this person/vehicle available?
 - a. City Employees

- b. Contracted hauler – if you're using a contracted hauler, make sure to be clear about when you need materials cleared from the collection site.
 - c. Volunteer labor – community service groups, other groups (please ensure waivers are signed and on file if utilizing volunteer labor).
- 4. Educate residents and on-site workers regarding how materials should be handled and packaged.
- 5. Do you need a contractor for harder to handle items such as appliances, electronics, tires, and hazardous material, or will you haul them to a contractor?
- 6. Where will collected materials go and what hours are those facilities open? What are that facility's rules? Do they have a covered load policy? There are rules in Iowa regarding where solid waste may be landfilled in state. Use the proper waste facility for your community. Information about solid waste planning areas may be found on this webpage: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/InsideDNR/RegulatoryLand/SolidWaste/ComprehensivePlanning.aspx> or contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources at (515) 281-5918.
- 7. Disposal Costs. Who is paying for material disposal?
 - City Budget
 - Sponsors
 - Fees from users - - If event users will pay fees:
 - What fee will be charged to residents for recycling/disposal of each type material?
 - How will that fee be paid?
 - Who will accept cash?
 - Will change be needed and who will be charged with acquiring it?

****Other things to consider:**

*Some materials/items are not considered hazardous, but may be hard to handle – such as still usable (not hardened) latex paint. Latex (water-based) paint is reusable and may be utilized by area residents as a primer or may be mixed together to make a taupe color. It can be popular stuff! You might consider setting up an area for residents to place usable latex for others to take. *Note – people tend to over-estimate the usability of their paint! You will need a volunteer to check to make sure paint is still stir-able, and is not moldy. You'll need an opener and a hammer. The volunteer can't be afraid to turn paint away. Before this event you must make arrangements to deal with left over paint – how will you*

use it up? See Page 10 for more information on Regional Collection Center/Household Hazardous Material for additional contacts.

Another material residents may wish to dispose of is used motor oil. Area businesses may use motor oil in furnaces. Check before your event to see if they would be willing to accept oil collected. People sometimes mix used oil with antifreeze and other liquids, so it is best if the final user of the oil to receive it directly from the resident. Household hazardous waste facilities may also accept used oil. For more information see the IDNR publication: http://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/waste/rcc_oilfactsheet.pdf.

F. Publicize the Community Cleanup Event

In addition to telling residents about the event, you should determine what else you want to accomplish with your publicity efforts. Publicity may serve several purposes:

- Recruit volunteers
- Inform residents, businesses, churches and others about what will happen and when
- Recognize sponsors and donors
- Recognize volunteers and organizers for the cleanup success
- Promote community pride
- Promote a message
- Increase awareness of proper handling and disposal of cleanup targeted items.

G. Recruit and Train Volunteers

There are many different ways volunteers can help to make a cleanup successful. Divide jobs according to ability and communicate with volunteers ahead of time so that they will know what they will do, what to bring, and what to wear, etc. Volunteers are often needed for the following:

- Set-up (set up check-in table, supplies, signage)
- Volunteer check-in table
- Paint Recycling Volunteer(s)
- Household Hazardous Materials Delivery area support
- Directing deliveries to the proper area, making sure people are not delivering everyday garbage
- Food/drinks
- Someone to direct traffic
- Spokesperson for media coverage of event
- People to tally number of cars that come to the event, or people, or weight of materials received

- Unloaders - consisting of staff/volunteers or both.
- If collecting hazardous materials – trained onsite personnel is required.

H. Assemble Tools and Supplies for Event Day

Determine what supplies will be needed based on the materials that will be collected. Materials might include but are not limited to the following:

- Trash bags
- Gloves
- Water
- First Aid Kit
- Make sure to have everyone's cell phones numbers and numbers for emergencies
- Duct Tape and Paper/Cardboard for Signs
- Any tools/carts needed for collection/pickup such as appliance cart
- Paint openers, stirrers, hammers or rubber mallets

Setting out containers

Don't be surprised if containers set out in unsecured areas before the event begin to fill up! Don't get upset by calls early in the week of the event by people who say they won't be around for the event and want to drop off their stuff early. Suggest they leave items with a neighbor – avoid taking items early!

Back Up Plans

Community cleanup events often prove to be very popular, so containers may fill up before events are done. Be sure to have additional containers or sites lined up for overflow materials in this type of situation.

How will you signal the event is over?

If you are having a weekend event, and containers, tires or appliances will not be collected until Monday, you might consider stepping up security through the weekend until pickup can take place to prevent additional deliveries from outside the area.

III. Event Day

A. Early Birds

The first people to arrive at the cleanup site should be responsible for overall coordination, field coordination, and volunteer coordination. Coordinators will oversee volunteers who set up the site with the check-in table, supplies, and signage. Volunteer coordinator(s) will also touch base with the table volunteers

and photographer to review work assignments. The field coordinator(s) will coordinate with the city personnel regarding trash collection. The site should be ready before the first cleanup volunteers arrive.

Reminders for the Coordinators:

- Know emergency procedures, such as the location of the nearest emergency facility and how to quickly summon the police or an ambulance.
- Have a first aid kit and cellular phone on hand

IV. After the Event

A. Assess Results

A report may include the number of volunteers who helped with the event, the pounds of materials recycled/landfilled, items collected – such as tires or appliances and anything else that is noteworthy. A report may also include information about how the event was planned, what worked well and what didn't work well, suggestions for the next cleanup event, and information about all sponsors and donors.

B. Thank Everyone

Thank everyone who helped to make the cleanup a success – especially volunteers!

C. Publicize

Shortly after the event publicize results and issue a public thank you for volunteers and partners. This assists in reinforcing the original message and purpose of the event as an opportunity to recognize those that participated.

V. Resources

Community/Organizational Partnerships – Encourage any and all organizations and partners to forward event information to their list serves and various networks.

Local Newsletters/Community Calendars – Consider forwarding your information to local businesses for publication in their respective newsletters. In addition post on local community calendars and forward to local radio and television stations for inclusion on their respective community calendars.

Personal Networks – Consider your personal networks. It may be likely that your friends, colleagues and acquaintances may be quite interested in your event; in fact, they might be interested in volunteering to assist.

Social Media – Consider using social media in publicizing the event. Programs such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn all offer a valuable forum in broadening your reach.

Speaking/Presentation Opportunities – Businesses and other organizations are continuously looking for speakers for lunch and learns, monthly meetings, annual conferences and workshops. Reach out to local businesses and organizations and make them aware of your event and offer to be a guest speaker at one of their upcoming meetings. At the very least provide them with marketing information to distribute to their membership.

Publicity

Suggested Timeline:

Publicity includes promoting the cleanup before it takes place, sharing event results and thanking volunteers and sponsors afterwards.

1-3 Months

- Schedule participation on radio talk shows, many stations have free chat format programming
- If there is money in the budget, set up radio, newspaper advertising
- Research free public service announcements including local cable access channels

1 Month

- Send a press release to newspapers by email or fax (see sample on page 9)
- Insert information on public billing - utilities like power, garbage, water

3 Weeks

- Put flyers up in public locations - library, meal-site, grocery store

Day of the Event

- After the event, collect all posters, yard signs, and banners

1 Day to 1 Week After

- Publicize the Results - You may be surprised to learn that people are interested in the results of the event - what was recycled? How much was landfilled? What was the cost of the event? Send a press release with the results of the cleanup and share the results with local press, newsletters, the neighborhood association

and others. Remember to share photographs and recognize everyone who contributed to the success of the cleanup.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date

CONTACT: Name
Address
Phone
Email

***INSERT CITY NAME* Community Cleanup**

XXX (City) residents will have the opportunity to improve the cleanliness, beauty and safety of the community, thanks to the Community Cleanup on Saturday, (insert date and time). The Community Cleanup will be held (insert address or location of event such at west end of Main Street).

These items/materials will be accepted at the Cleanup Event: *(insert delivery/fee requirements here) examples:*

- Bulky Items (furniture, mattresses, rolled up carpet/pad) - place in dumpster west end of Main Street. Metal Items (barbeque grills, lawn mowers, other large metal objects) place in metal recycling bin west end of Main Street.
- Tires - limit 4 per household, place in recycling area on event day
- Appliances - \$\$\$ fee
- Electronics - \$\$\$ fee

What we will not accept:

- Ordinary household garbage
- Hazardous materials (unless you have made arrangements with a Household Hazardous Waste Facility to accept those materials on that date) - for disposal of those materials contact the Regional Collection Center at xxx-xxx-xxxx (get this from local solid waste agency or IDNR see Resources Page 10) -

You may wish to insert information about on-going waste collection efforts here as well – such as permanent recycling and hazardous materials collection programs at the local landfill.

The event is sponsored by the City of XXX and (and volunteer groups). If you would like to volunteer to help at this event or if you have questions call City Hall, Phone xxx-xxxx.

Staffing/Volunteer Information

Garbage and Recycling Area

#Collection Container Staff/Volunteers

Task

	Monitor the collection containers so that the right types of materials go in them
	Help to put materials into the collection containers.

Recycling Area Volunteers

Task

	Monitor materials that go into the collection containers, recycling areas
	Help to put materials into the collection containers.

Bulky Item Cleanup Volunteers

Some communities collect bulky items such as appliances during the week prior to the Cleanup Event. If this is how your community handles bulky waste, assign physically fit staff/volunteers to help with collecting and moving bulky items and tires. Ensure that volunteers understand where to put collected bulky items. Have volunteers work with city personnel as directed and report items that are too large to move. City staff should have information regarding addresses if stickers were sold for curbside pickup of items like appliances.

Staff/Volunteers

Task

	Work in pairs or teams to collect appliances/bulky items and take to designated areas.
	Report items that volunteers cannot move to the organizers.
	Drive pickup trucks or flatbeds with collected materials and take to designated areas

Volunteer Recruitment

Once you go through the worksheets above, you should have an idea of how many volunteers you might need. How can you get them lined up? Consider contacting the groups below.

Volunteer Groups

Consider contacting the following organized groups for volunteers:

4-H Clubs – leaders and high school age members, Chamber of Commerce, Civic Leagues, Environmental Clubs, Jaycees Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, Local Businesses/Corporations, Parks and Recreation, Religious Groups, Rotary Clubs, High Schools/School Clubs - Biology classes, FFA, Student Government or High School sports teams.

Safety Tips for Staff/Volunteers

- Make sure all workers wear gloves and thick-soled, closed shoes
- Make sure all workers wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts
- Hand out safety vests or make sure workers wear bright colors

Suggestions:

- Workers should wear sunscreen and bug repellent
- Provide a cooler so workers can drink plenty of fluids
- Keep “quick energy foods” on hand
- Share cell phone numbers so you can easily phone each other with questions or information
- Post emergency numbers at each collection event area
- Train volunteers in proper lifting techniques
- Only handle hazardous materials if trained to do so
- All workers should wear proper PPE at all times

Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Community Cleanup Online/Phone Information

The Customer Service Line at IDNR is 515-281-5918

There are many web pages and staff members available at IDNR to help your community provide safe, convenient disposal opportunities for residents. Whether you have questions about electronics, appliance collection, household hazardous materials, recycling or just plain garbage, IDNR is here to help. The main solid waste web page is listed here:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/LandStewardship/WasteManagement/FABA.aspx>

Planning and utilization of available resources may help reduce costs associated with Community Cleanups. Remember that your local area solid waste agency is a key resource for helping set up your community cleanup event. If you don't know who that is, get contact information here:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/InsideDNR/RegulatoryLand/SolidWaste/ComprehensivePlanning.aspx>. Click *Planning Area Contacts* under *Resources*.

Iowa Waste Exchange

The Iowa Waste Exchange is a free, confidential, non-regulatory service of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and is administered by Region XII Council of Governments. Area Resource Specialists are housed throughout the state and can serve as a resource for all aspects of planning your event. You can access your local resource specialist at:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/LandStewardship/WasteManagement/IowaWasteExchangeIWE.aspx>

Waste Tires

- **You may be able to work with your local solid waste facility for recycling. If you contract directly with a hauler, make sure to utilize a contractor who will properly recycle/dispose of tires.** Individuals or firms engaged in the hauling of waste tires for a fee must register annually with the department before hauling waste tires in Iowa, according to Iowa law. Registered haulers are listed here: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/portals/idnr/uploads/waste/tirehaulerlist.pdf>
- This law applies to firms that pick up tires within Iowa or that bring waste tires to Iowa for disposal, storage or processing.
- If you plan to haul tires yourself you may take them to a recycling center that accepts tires. Many Iowa solid waste facilities (landfills and waste transfer stations) accept waste tires. Or deliver them to a permitted tire processing facility. For additional information visit: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/LandStewardship/WasteManagement/Tires.aspx>

Appliances

Appliances can contain hazardous materials such as capacitors, so they must be properly handled before recycling. Appliances include large items such as Freon containing refrigerators, freezers and humidifiers. Non-Freon appliances include washers, dryers, dishwashers, microwaves, water heaters, humidifiers, and furnaces. They do not include small appliances like blenders, waffle irons, toasters and mixers. **Cities should make sure to work with a contractor who will properly demanufacture and recycle appliances.** Some communities arrange for a contractor to do the collection at the community cleanup event, or they may pick up collected appliances shortly after the event. Contractors typically load items upright onto trailers to transport to their demanufacturing location. Check out the DNR's web page on appliance demanufacturing for more information visit: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/portals/idnr/uploads/waste/appliancefactsheet.pdf>

Electronics

Electronics may also contain hazardous materials, such as lead and other heavy metals. In Iowa residents may legally landfill household quantities of electronics such as televisions, copiers, faxes and computer towers, keyboards and monitors. See the DNR Website:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/LandStewardship/WasteManagement/Recycling/Ewaste/UnwantedElectronics.aspx>

Household Hazardous Waste:

Contact the Hazardous Materials service provider in your area to find out more about providing safe collection of those materials. Some providers may be able to offer a

mobile collection during your community event or at another date, while other providers may provide safe disposal instructions for hand out at your event. Keep in mind that though latex paint may not be latex paint is not considered hazardous in Iowa. See the DNR website:
<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/HouseholdHazardousMaterials.aspx>

Waste Flow Information

Iowa's Cities and Counties for proper management of solid waste generated within their jurisdiction. If waste from an Iowa city is to be disposed of at a landfill in Iowa, it has to go to the landfill the city directs its garbage to. For more information about solid waste planning locate the planning area map here along with the legend:
<http://www.iowadnr.gov/InsideDNR/RegulatoryLand/SolidWaste/ComprehensivePlanning.aspx>.

See this web document for more information:
<http://www.iowadnr.gov/portals/idnr/uploads/waste/wasteflowfactsheet.pdf>