



# SIERRA CLUB

## Toolkit to Organize a Tobacco Product Waste Cleanup

Tobacco litter cleanups may be conducted in a variety of places. Some of the most common are parks, beaches, walkways, neighborhoods, and college campuses. Typically, cigarette butts will be the most littered items you find; however, you may also want to consider picking up other forms of tobacco litter, such as cigar tips, vape waste and packaging. Below are useful tips for organizing a cleanup.

### Planning Stage

Identify a location that has a significant amount of tobacco litter. Contact the appropriate person at the designated location to determine if it is possible to host a cleanup at that location.

Identify local groups or committees that may be interested in getting involved. Partner with local groups or committees that have the ability and interest to engage the community by: recruiting volunteers, preparing announcements, collecting survey data, and soliciting sponsorships for prizes and giveaways.

Choose a date and time when the target community is available to participate. Consider conducting the cleanup during relevant observances already occurring, such as: Earth Month (April), World No Tobacco Day (May), Great American Smoke out (November). Enlist the help of a local celebrity (a professional athlete or entertainer, for example) to help champion the cause of your cleanup and the importance of ending tobacco product waste litter. Plan for the cleanup event to be one (1) hour long. Use the items in this toolkit.

### 4 weeks prior to the event

Contact your local government to determine if a permit is needed. Invite local leaders and the media to the cleanup. Distribute fliers advertising the cleanup in areas frequented by those you want to recruit as volunteers. Make sure the fliers include the date and location of the cleanup, how/where to sign up, and contact information of the organizer. Also provide an overview of the tobacco waste issue, how it relates to quality of life, public health, and protecting agriculture communities along with the conserving quality water. Map out the cleanup area. Based on the size of the area and amount of visible tobacco litter, determine how many volunteers will be needed for the cleanup to be a success. Recruit volunteers to participate. Volunteers may come from a variety of places, you may have the best luck recruiting students from public health, environment. Be sure to keep a running tally of the number of volunteers than needed for the cleanup to be a success.

## 1-2 Weeks Prior to the Event

Prepare a liability waiver and photo release forms (if applicable) for participants to sign. Contact all volunteers to remind them about the event, reiterating the date, time, location, and where to meet. Also include liability waivers, photo release forms, maps of the cleanup areas, and assigned duties. Sample duties would include: picking up all the butts in their assigned area and counting the number of butts collected. Include what will be provided to them (bags, gloves, etc.) and make suggestions of what volunteers should bring themselves (water bottle, etc.).

Contact local newspapers, cable television, and news stations to inform them about the cleanup, invite them to cover the event, and provide background information about the tobacco product waste issue.

Notify local businesses about the event and encourage them to donate prizes.

## 2 Days Prior to the Event

- Make follow-up calls to local media.
- Purchase large baggies or trash bags for collecting butts and multiple pairs of gloves for each volunteer.
- Organize and package supplies that need to be taken to the site (bags, gloves, markers, maps, etc.).

## Day of Event

Meet with volunteers prior to the start of the cleanup to answer questions and distribute supplies (gloves, plastic bags, and markers). Have maps with volunteer assignments readily available. Remind them to count the number of butts they collect. If collecting tobacco product waste or other emerging nicotine delivery devices have them keep track of those as well, preferably in separate bags or see-through containers. Collect tobacco product waste, place in bags or containers and remind each volunteer to count them along the way. Take photos of volunteers collecting butts. Include before/after pictures of the cleanup areas.

At the end of the cleanup, have each volunteer write the number of tobacco product waste collected on their containers or bags. Place all of the collected tobacco product waste in larger clear jars to display the number collected. This is a great visual that emphasizes the cleanup burden of tobacco product waste. This is also a great way to re-emphasize the importance of smoke free environment, in conjunction with keeping the community, campus, or public area clean and raising awareness about the environmental impacts of tobacco product waste. Ask participants to guess how many butts/TPW are in the jar and award a prize to the closest guess. Announce how many cigarette butts/TPW were picked up via a press release, campus newspaper and social media, and how this relates to the health and safety of the community and environment.

Make sure to dispose of any trash and take all materials from the event with you. Use social media before, during, and after your event to invite other to join the cleanup and track progress and results.

## SAFETY TIPS FOR CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS

- Wear gloves and thick soled, closed shoes
- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts
- Wear bright colors for roadside cleanups
- Wear sunscreen and bug repellent
- Drink plenty of fluids and keep "quick energy foods" on hand
- Be aware of your surroundings and the potential hazards associated with them (e.g. passing cars, hazardous tree branches, poison ivy, etc.)
- Use the "buddy system" and work in teams of two or three to maximize safety
- Wash hands with soap after the cleanup
- Bag litter according to directions and place in designated locations
- Remember to take breaks when needed
- Don't pick up hazardous materials such as hypodermic needles, sharp objects, old car
- batteries, condoms, animal carcasses or other unidentified, questionable objects
- Don't overstuff bags
- Don't bring pets to the event as they may distract participants or even detract from the cleanup
- Don't enter water if doing a waterway cleanup
- Don't attempt to move large, heavy objects. Report illegal dumping, graffiti, tires and bulk items to the event coordinators
- Make sure to have fun

## Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Name, Address, Phone, Email

Youth and Community Volunteers Participate in Tobacco Product Waste Cleanup -committed to improving the cleanliness, beauty and safety of their community, youth and community volunteers will clean the XXXX neighborhood on Saturday May 14<sup>th</sup> from 10am-12pm XXX Street to XXX Street.

Sponsored by Young Adult Advisory Board with Sierra Club Tobacco Product Waste. This cleanup is important because \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

Coalition Chair

## **MEDIA RELEASE FORM**

CONSENT TO PHOTOGRAPH, AUDIO, OR VIDEOTAPE A STUDENT FOR NON-PROFIT USE.

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby consent to the participation in interviews of, and the use of quotes spoken by, and the taking of photographs, audio, video of, the person/person's named above, which actions may occur at both in person and online events, by the Sierra Club Mother Lode Chapter. I hereby grant Sierra Club the right to edit, use, and reuse said interviews, quotes, photographs, audio or video for any purpose and without limitation, including use in print, on the internet, and all other forms of media. I hereby release Sierra Club, its agents and employees, from all claims, demands, and liabilities whatsoever arising from or in connection with Sierra Club actions hereunder.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **GENERAL RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

I, on behalf of myself, do hereby fully release and discharge Sierra Club, its agents and employees, from all claims, demands, and liabilities whatsoever arising from or in connection with Sierra Club transportation of the above-named person/person's. I, on behalf of myself and my child(ren) or word(s), do hereby waive any and all claims, which may have or may acquire, or which may accrue to me, my heirs, my guardians, administrators, executors, or assignee's, including attorney fees and court cost arising out of or in connection with my child's participation in such program.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_