

VOLUNTEER LITTER PICKING GUIDANCE DURING COVID-19

Remember volunteers have a duty towards themselves, fellow volunteers and the public to work safely. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a member of Council staff who will assist.

Before you get started, please take a moment to familiarise yourself with the important information in this guidance leaflet.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will provide you with the following equipment:

- A litter picking device
- A high visibility waistcoat
- Gloves

Although group litter picking is now allowed to take place in line with Government regulations, we still need to observe the basic COVID-19 guidelines, to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Do not leave home if you or someone you live with has any of the following-

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

[Check the NHS website if you have symptoms](#)

- Ensure you are wearing gloves
- Do not touch litter directly, use a litter picking device (which we will provide)
- Please place your collected litter in a bag and leave it in a litter bin or take it home to put in your household refuse bin. If you are part of group litter pick, you will be advised where to leave collected waste and recycling.
- Do not touch your face and wash your hands thoroughly when you return home.

Your safety is very important to us and we want to ensure that you are equipped to take part in this activity.

Manual Handling Advice

Please be aware of the risk of injury by carrying bags of collected litter. Do not attempt to lift and carry heavy materials.

To avoid injury, the basic principles of manual handling should be applied:

- Use the litter picking device supplied to you to prevent constant bending and stretching.
- Decide if an item can be safely moved either by one or two people, only try to move an item if this can be done so without straining.
- When lifting an item, bend your legs and keep your back straight.

Volunteers please DO:

- ✓ Cover any cuts or sores with a waterproof plaster before carrying out the litter pick. Consider carrying some basic first aid provision including hand sanitiser cleansing gel.
- ✓ Cover up in the sun. Take water to keep hydrated in warm weather.
- ✓ Always wear your high visibility waistcoat when collecting litter and wear appropriate/suitable clothing for weather conditions.
- ✓ Carry out a visual inspection of the area to establish the risks and to identify possible hazards.
- ✓ Use the litter picking device and gloves provided - do not touch litter unless necessary.
- ✓ Separate recyclable items of litter if possible, clear bags for this purpose can be supplied if requested.
- ✓ Report any issues as soon as possible, using the contact number provided to you.
- ✓ Report any broken glass, sharp objects or other hazardous waste, using the contact number provided to you.
- ✓ Let Council staff know if items are too heavy or awkward to handle, report fly tipping or dangerous substances.
- ✓ Work only from footways or verges wide enough to provide sufficient distance from traffic. Work towards oncoming traffic. Take extreme care when crossing roads. Only litter pick on one side of the road so crossing is kept to a minimum.
- ✓ Be aware of low hanging branches and exposed tree and shrub roots. Beware of dangerous plants and possible adverse reactions
- ✓ Avoid contact with animals. Be mindful of wildlife. In the spring avoid disturbing animals and birds that may be nesting and in the summer be wary of wasp and bee nests.
- ✓ Once finished, ensure cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance

Volunteers please DON'T:

- ✗ Wear open toe shoes; wear unsuitable footwear for uneven/unstable ground and the weather.
- ✗ Do anything that is likely to endanger yourself or others, including litter picking close to a busy road or in bad weather when visibility is poor, or it is icy under foot.
- ✗ Touch anything that may be hazardous (this includes but is not limited to needles and syringes, human and animal waste, blood, batteries, and anything that is suspected to contain asbestos). Contact Council staff for removal.
- ✗ Litter pick in rivers, ponds or waterways.
- ✗ Reach into bushes to extract litter with your hands. Use the litter picking device or report hard to reach litter to the Council.
- ✗ Sort through waste materials inside bags or bins. Don't overfill bags so they become too heavy to comfortably handle.
- ✗ Litter pick in weather conditions that may threaten your health.
- ✗ Work on the roadside if the speed limit is 40mph or over.
- ✗ Litter pick on the highway or in the road.
- ✗ Attempt to deal with aggressive or difficult people. Do not confront anyone littering, please report this to Council staff.
- ✗ Litter pick where loose dogs may be present.
- ✗ Touch wire fences always assume they are electric fences that are live.
- ✗ Litter pick at a height that involves climbing.
- ✗ Collect litter from privately owned land, if in doubt check with the Council.