



Tips for Planning Safe Cleanups

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Trails and Waterways
500 Lafayette Road - Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155-4052
(651) 259-5630 or 1(888) MINNDNR (6466367)
www.dnr.state.mn.us/adoptriver



Volunteer's Tips for a Safe and Successful Cleanup:

Your safety is your responsibility and should be your first concern. The most important thing to remember is to **KNOW YOUR LIMITS**, both mentally and physically. If you come across something that exceeds your physical abilities or seems strange to you, leave it alone and seek assistance from someone more familiar with it. Please report any injuries to your cleanup organizer immediately.

1. Always conduct your cleanups in a group, not alone. If one person is hurt, others can get help. Also, always maintain voice and eye contact with a member of your group.
2. Watch your footing on steep river banks, they may be soft or unstable. Avoid stepping on loose stones and rocks when possible.
3. If planning a cleanup where the threat of drowning exists (steep banks, waterways, etc.), wear a life jacket and follow all safety regulations (Minnesota Boater's Guides and Boater Safety Materials can be sent upon request from the *Order Form*).
4. Children under age 16 should work with an adult. Parents should instruct their children and guests under age 16 that they are to be under supervision of a specific adult.
5. **Never pick up needles or hypodermic syringes!** Wear gloves when handling all other sharp objects. If you encounter needles or syringes, mark the area in some way and notify your group leader so they can be properly picked up and placed in a labeled container. Do not reach into places you cannot see inside.
6. Handle aerosol cans only while wearing safety goggles or glasses. Never puncture them. Pick them up with the top facing downward. Always keep such containers at arm's length.
7. Lift with your legs, not your back, and follow the instructions on the "Eight Commandments of Lifting," handout.
8. Do not overfill or compact trash bags. Broken or jagged objects can pierce the bags and cause injury.
9. Clean only rubbish above ground. You may not only strain your back, but digging may create a bank erosion problem or a hazardous hole. Tell your crew leader about the object and mark its location.
10. Do not irritate or disturb other creatures living in the area, human or otherwise. Carefully leave the area if you are concerned, and report the location to your group leader.

11. Be conscious of the weather. This includes working only during daylight hours, being aware of potentially slippery areas, and being aware of possible storms. If you are caught in a lightning storm, it is important to find shelter in low-lying areas away from natural lightning rods such as trees and other tall objects.
12. Do not move sealed drums. Mark and report their location to your group leader.
13. **Please take this page and the *Illegal Drug Labs and other Hazardous Materials handout*, with you and make sure EVERYONE has read the safety tips and is following them.**

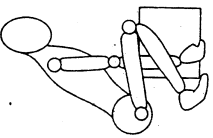
Other important concerns:

- Dress appropriately: sturdy shoes (no sandals), long pants, hat, gloves, sun screen, and insect repellent (if needed).
- Every group leader should be proficient in first aid and have the necessary supplies to treat minor injuries immediately.
- Avoid overexertion and drink plenty of water, especially on hot, humid days.
- Know and avoid poison ivy and stinging nettles (see *Plants to Avoid*).
- Avoid dead animals. Mark their location and report them to your crew leader to be managed properly.
- Maintain good communication with the other people cleaning up. If an emergency develops, make sure someone is available to call for additional help (a cellular phone is usually a good option).
- Following the cleanup, make sure to conduct a thorough tick search (if appropriate) and wash yourself off as soon as possible.

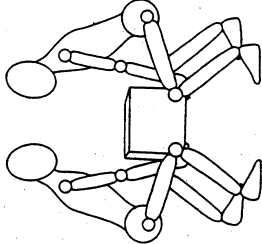
Eight Commandments of Lifting

The Eight Commandments of Lifting

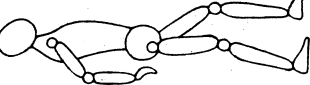
Use proper body mechanics when you are lifting, bending or pushing. Follow the Eight Commandments of Lifting (or the lifting technique preferred by your company) whenever you have to move a load. Think before you lift, and you will eliminate a lot of unnecessary pain. Pivot, don't twist to move objects. Lift smoothly, don't jerk the object you are lifting. Push, don't pull heavy objects. Move, don't over stretch to reach items on your desk or at a table. Sit and stand with your spine aligned, don't hunch over at your desk or stand in an awkward position.



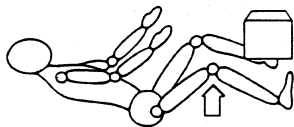
1. Plan your lift and test the load.
Before you lift, think about the item you are going to move and ask yourself: "Can I lift this alone? Is it too awkward for one person? Is the path clear?" Also, test the load to see approximately how heavy it is before lifting.



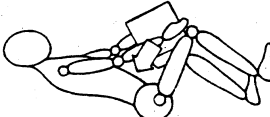
2. Ask for help.
If the load is too heavy or too awkward for you to lift, ask for assistance.



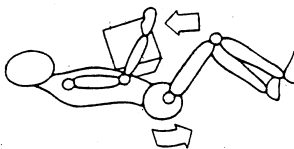
3. Get a firm footing.
Keep your feet apart for a stable base and point your toes outward.



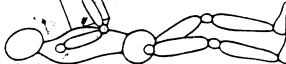
4. Bend your knees.
Don't bend at the waist. Keep the principles of leverage in mind at all times. Don't do more work than necessary.



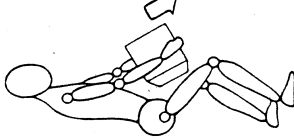
5. Tighten your stomach muscles.
Use intra-abdominal pressure to support your spine when you lift, offsetting the force of the load. Train your muscles to work together.



6. Lift with your legs.
Let your leg muscles do the work of lifting. Don't rely on your weaker back muscles.



7. Keep the load close.
Don't hold the load away from your body. The closer it is to your spine, the less force it exerts on your back.



8. Keep your back upright.
Whether lifting or putting down the load, don't add the weight of your body to the load. Avoid twisting.