



Student Roles for Hosting a Beach Cleanup

Beach cleanups are an important tool in the fight against plastic pollution. They are an easy way to engage volunteers and show direct impacts. Oftentimes, beach cleanups are people's first interaction with the Surfrider Foundation and their experience can catapult them to be more involved activists. Beach cleanups provide Surfrider with valuable data on what items are ending up on our beaches and we can use this data to help pass plastic pollution policy to keep our beaches plastic free.

Disclaimer: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, large group gatherings are not permitted. The Surfrider Foundation is currently engaging in solo cleanups or small group gatherings, where allowed. Please refer to the [Solo Cleanup Guidelines](#) for additional information and safety tips.

Recommended Roles

Cleanup Captain

The cleanup captain is responsible for assigning other roles and ensuring that deadlines are met. Come up with a checklist of tasks to be done and remind the team of any outstanding items. Look over [How to Host a Beach Cleanup](#) to get a complete picture of what needs to be done. They will choose a day for the cleanup when your volunteers will be free, like on a weekend, and at a time when the beach will be empty, like early in the morning depending on the amount of people participating. They will also help the Location and Safety & Logistics Leads determine a location for the cleanup and secure permits.

At the beach cleanup, the Cleanup Captain will give a welcome speech, decide on a data collection method (A or B, outlined [here](#)), and give participants instructions on where to clean up, what to pick up and when to come back to the meeting location. Provide information about any potentially hazardous areas to avoid (your Location Lead can assist), as well as what they can expect to pick up and tips on how to do so safely.

Make sure that all trash and recycling is properly disposed of and that nothing has been left behind after the event. Remind the team of any tasks that need to be done after the beach cleanup.

Location Lead

The Location Lead is responsible for scouting the location of the cleanup and handling the other logistics. Choose a beach that's convenient and in need of a cleanup. You should also try to choose a spot that will be easy for volunteers to get to and if possible with restrooms and easy parking available. Scout out the area if needed a few days beforehand. Plan in advance where you'll meet your volunteers and what areas you'll clean. You should also figure out where you'll

leave your full bags of trash and recyclables, where your volunteers will park, and if you'll need to post any signs to help them find you.

Determine parking areas for your volunteers. How easy will it be for your volunteers to get in/out and find parking. If the beach is supervised by your local city government, ask if they have parking restrictions or recommendations i.e. metered parking, day use fees, street permit parking. If you think your volunteers will have trouble parking, find alternative solutions. Walk around nearby neighborhoods and look for available street parking, or ask your volunteers to carpool or take public transportation.

You should also look over your site for safety hazards like rocks, changing tides, roads, and power lines.

Safety & Logistics Lead

The Safety Lead is responsible for getting permission to hold the beach cleanup, obtaining event insurance, and organizing an emergency plan.

Get permission from local officials to hold your beach clean up. If you want to hold your clean up at a public beach, you may need to consult local parks and recreation offices about getting any permits that might be necessary. They can also let you know whether the area will be closed for any reason on your planned date. If you're not sure who to contact about permits and permissions, call your local city hall office.

Please visit the ChapterNET "Support" Section to obtain insurance coverage for your clean up or [click here](#). All beach clean ups, regardless of location are required to secure insurance coverage.

Organize an emergency plan, just in case. Write up a list of police, fire department and hospital phone numbers. Bring along a basic first aid kit as well, so you can treat any cuts or bruises that volunteers may get.

Event Promoter

The Event Promoter is responsible for getting information out about the beach cleanup and letting volunteers know of any important information. Communication with your volunteers is key so they know what to expect. Make a general announcement for the clean up about one month before via your social media sites, website and direct emails. Remember to include, date, time, location and meeting place among any other important information. If you want to broaden your outreach strategy to an even bigger audience, put up flyers at schools, local businesses, and parks. Work with the Equipment Coordinator to make sure there are signs for the day of the cleanup.

If possible send out a reminder email 1-2 days before the event to anyone who has registered for the event or via a general reminder email to your members with the date, time, and location. This is also a great time to pass on important information, like the weather outlook for the clean up day, parking instructions, what will be provided, what people should bring and clothing

recommendations. Have your volunteers wear suitable and protective clothing. Recommend that they bring sun protection, like sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses. Remind them to bring reusable water bottles to stay hydrated and snack if they would like to. Work with the Equipment Coordinator and Food and Beverage Lead (if applicable) to determine what items will be provided for volunteers.

At the cleanup, work with the Volunteer Coordinator to arrive early and post signs or banners to help volunteers find you. Put up signs with the name of your event in the parking area and the area where you'll meet your volunteers. If you have a few latecomers and need to move to another location, write a note on a sign to tell them where you're going, or draw an arrow to show them where they can find you.

Take a picture of the whole group to post and share. Before your volunteers leave, remember to get a group picture that you can share on social media and with Surfrider Foundation. This is a great way of saying thank you to your volunteers while inspiring others with your clean up efforts.

Send out a thank-you text or email. A day or so after your event, send out a brief email or text thanking your volunteers for showing up and helping out. This is a great way to show them your gratitude and remind them of the great impact they made. You can also include a few details from your beach cleanup, like how much trash you picked or the strangest piece of trash someone found.

Equipment Coordinator

The Equipment Coordinator is responsible for gathering any necessary equipment for the beach cleanup and ensuring that it is there on the day of the cleanup. If there is not a Food and Beverage Coordinator, the Equipment Coordinator is also responsible for bringing a large water cooler for volunteers to fill up their bottles.

Use [this list](#) as a checklist and guide on what equipment to bring. Work with your Cleanup Captain to determine what supplies are needed for the cleanup and how to best gather them.

At the cleanup, the Equipment Coordinator will work with the Volunteer Coordinator to help set up and distribute the equipment to volunteers. Make sure to collect everything once the cleanup is over.

Volunteer Coordinator

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for setting up the meeting area, checking everyone in and for answering any volunteer questions about the cleanup. They will help direct volunteers to where they need to go and what they need to do. Arrive 30 minutes early and work with the Equipment Coordinator and Event Promoter to get the welcome area set up and place any signs or directions.

Check volunteers in as they arrive. Set up a table with paper and pens for your volunteers to check in, or simply pass around a clipboard as they arrive. You should get their name and email

addresses. All participants must sign a [waiver](#) and minors must have their parents signatures as well. Make sure these waivers are being signed and collected. Work closely with your team to make sure items are being distributed and returned.

Data Coordinator

The Data Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that cleanup data is collected and inputted into the database. Work with your Cleanup Captain to determine how volunteers will be collecting data. If you are using data cards, print them out and bring them to the event. If you are using the Marine Debris Tracker App, make sure that you are able to explain how to use it and answer any volunteer questions that might come up about how to use the app. Always have a couple of extra data cards on hand, should anyone not bring a phone. At the cleanup, if data cards are used, make sure to collect them all.

After the cleanup, the Data Coordinator is responsible for making sure cleanup data is entered in [Surfrider's Database](#). If the Club Manager is inputting data, work with them to ensure a timely data entry. Share any fun findings or cleanup results with the Event Promoter so they can share with the cleanup participants.

Optional Roles

Partnerships Coordinator

The Partnerships Coordinator is responsible for doing any outreach and coordination with any beach cleanup partners. You might have a local business who wants to sponsor a cleanup or you might want to invite other environmental organizations to co-host a beach cleanup. Look at [this guide](#) for sponsorship guidelines. If co-hosting, help divy up the responsibilities and roles with the other group. Make sure the Event Promoter knows to include them in any cleanup promotions and keep any partners aware of updates or changes. After the cleanup, thank them. Remind the Data Coordinator to include the partner as a co-organizer when inputting the cleanup data on the database.

Food and Beverage Coordinator

The Food and Beverage Coordinator is responsible for securing and bringing any food and drinks. Bring a large water cooler so participants can refill their reusable bottles. If possible, bring low-waste snacks to keep volunteers' energy up. People will be much more excited to come to your event if they know that snacks will be provided. Try working with an OFR to provide some snacks or try to secure some donations from local companies. If you don't have the funds for food, work with the Event Promoter to specify that volunteers should bring along their own snacks.