

# HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDANCE

Thank you for borrowing equipment from the **PACT** Litter Picking Bank! This free community resource is funded by the **OPFCC**. Whether you are part of a PACT event or running an independent community clean-up, safety is the absolute priority.

If you are leading an independent group, you are responsible for the safety and conduct of your volunteers on the day. Please ensure all members of your group read and understand these guidelines before you begin.

## 1. BEFORE YOU START: GROUP LEADER



- **Council Coordination:** The group coordinator must coordinate with the relevant council (e.g., Westmorland and Furness) for the collection and disposal of filled rubbish bags. *See contacts on the other side.*
- **Risk Assessment:** We recommend that the group leader completes their own risk assessment prior to the pick.
- **Insurance:** Litter pick events and groups should have in place their own public liability insurance, or be operating under a national body/scheme which has insurance in place. Individuals/informal groups must sign a waiver to ensure they understand that they are carrying out the pick at their own risks. All events that aren't organised by PACT will not be covered by PACT.
- **Young Volunteers:** Volunteers under the age of 18 should be supervised by a responsible adult and permission for their participation should be gained from a parent or guardian.
- **First Aid & Emergencies:** The group coordinator must carry a first aid kit. Ensure the coordinator has a fully charged mobile phone

## 2. BEFORE YOU START: VOLUNTEERS



- **Dress for the weather:** Wear sturdy, closed-toe footwear and weather-appropriate clothing.
- **Wear high-vis:** Especially if working near roads.
- **Cover up:** Ensure any existing cuts or grazes are covered with a waterproof plaster before putting gloves on.
- **Check your kit:** Ensure you have your litter picker, bag hoop, heavy-duty gloves, and a supply of bin bags before setting off.

# 3.

## DURING THE PICK: THE GOLDEN RULES



- **Manual Handling:** Plastic rubbish bags should not be filled beyond the capacity to be easily lifted with one hand.
- **Leave Inaccessible Litter:** Litter which is not easily accessible should not be collected. Volunteers should avoid putting themselves at risk of falling on uneven or slippery surfaces or of injury by overreaching. If it cannot be reached safely, leave it!
- **Dense Vegetation:** Volunteers should not try to access litter in dense vegetation. Bramble, hawthorn, branches and twigs can cause serious injury.
- **Bag Placement:** Full bags should be tied and left for later collection in the pre-arranged location, where the bags do not cause a hazard or obstruction.

# 4.

## HAZARDOUS ITEMS: WHAT NOT TO TOUCH



- **Needles and Syringes:** If volunteers find discarded syringes or needles the group coordinator should be informed and they should be placed in a special container.
- **Sharp Objects:** Particular care should be exercised when picking up broken glass, metal etc with sharp edges which may pierce the plastic bag.
- **Fly-tipping:** Where volunteers find large items of fly tipping they should not attempt to remove them but note the location and report it to the group coordinator. Large items should also be reported to the group leader.
- **Dead Animals:** Dead wildlife is best left for natural scavengers. If a dead pet with a name tag is found inform the group coordinator.

# 5.

## HYGIENE AND WRAPPING UP



- **Infection Risk:** Volunteers should be aware that there is a risk of infection when handling litter and when working in or near water.
- **Wash thoroughly:** Volunteers should take suitable precautions and wash their hands as soon as possible after litter picking and before eating or drinking.
- **Cuts during the pick:** If volunteers sustain a cut whilst collecting litter they should act to prevent infection.
- **Return the gear:** The group coordinator is responsible to ensure all borrowed equipment is returned via collection/drop off.

# 6.

## DISCLAIMER & CONTACTS



- **Disclaimer:** Volunteers should not participate in a litter pick unless they fully understand and accept that participation is entirely at their own risk.
- **Emergency Services:** In a genuine emergency, always dial 999. For non-emergency medical advice, dial 111.
- Cumberland Council waste team: [wasteos@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:wasteos@cumberland.gov.uk)
- Westmorland & Furness: [contracts@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:contracts@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)