Shoreline Cleanup Volunteer Handbook

Volunteer handbook | 2026 edition

Thank you for volunteering. Every bag of debris removed from a Chesapeake Bay tributary helps protect wildlife, recreation, and the character of waterfront communities. This handbook explains what to expect before, during, and after a cleanup.

Program overview

The fictional Shoreline Cleanup Program organizes volunteers at parks, boat ramps, and marshes across the region. Events usually last two to three hours and welcome all experience levels. Children should be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Before the event

- [ ] Register so organizers can plan supplies
- [ ] Check the forecast and tide times
- [ ] Wear closed-toe shoes and clothes that can get muddy
- [ ] Bring a refillable water bottle, sunscreen, and a hat
- [ ] Bring work gloves if available

On site

1. Sign in with the site captain.
2. Attend the short safety briefing.
3. Collect a bag, gloves, and a tally sheet.
4. Work in pairs and stay within the marked area.
5. Bring full bags to the collection point.
6. Return your tally sheet before leaving.

Safety guidelines

- Do not pick up sharp objects by hand. Mark them and notify a site captain.
- Do not touch containers that may hold chemicals or unknown liquids.
- Stay off unstable banks and out of deep or fast-moving water.
- Leave wildlife, nests, and marsh plants undisturbed.
- Take breaks in the shade and drink water often.

> **Remember:** No piece of trash is worth a risk. If something looks unsafe, leave it in place and tell a site captain.

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What gets counted

Tally sheets show which items are most common. The results help the program talk with communities about prevention.

Category	Common examples
Plastic	Bottles, bags, food wrappers, straws
Metal	Cans, bottle caps, foil
Glass	Bottles and jars, only when unbroken
Fishing gear	Line, bobbers, and lures
Other	Tires, buoys, and unusual finds

Volunteer roles

Role	What it involves	Good fit for
Site captain	Leads sign-in and safety briefing	Returning volunteers
Collector	Gathers debris in the marked area	Everyone
Recorder	Tracks items on tally sheets	Detail-minded helpers
Greeter	Welcomes guests and hands out supplies	Outgoing volunteers

After the event

Wash your hands, share a photo with friends if you like, and consider bringing a neighbor next time. Program totals are shared at the end of each season.

Questions about this fictional program can be sent to sample@example.com or 410-555-0142.

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