

Safety Meeting Guidelines for Group Leaders

The group leaders are responsible for two (2) safety meetings per year. The Group Safety Meeting checklist has been developed to help group leaders give training to their groups. The group leaders need to cover all the points on the checklist. The following information under each category has been developed to help supplement the information on the checklist.

Safety Items Discussed

Work Plan

The public highway system is a very dangerous environment. The group's work plan will help protect those who are picking up litter. The agreement calls for the assigned area to be cleaned three (3) times per year. The plan should include the following:

Review of Work Location

Make sure everyone in the group knows where your assigned section is. Do not forget to mention any hazardous parts of the site.

General Approach

How will the group approach the cleanup? How many people will be involved in the task? Into how many work units can the group be divided? Where will each unit start working? What extra tasks need to be done?

Individual Assignments

Who will hand out the required safety vests or who will check to see if everyone is wearing the appropriate amount of fluorescent blaze orange? Who will bring drinking water and where will it be located? Who will put up warning signs and take them back down after the work is finished? Who will be responsible for bringing a first aid kit? Who will be responsible for getting help if there is an emergency? What adults will supervise what children? The agreement says, "When participants are fifteen (15) years of age or younger, the group shall furnish adult supervision equal to one adult per each ten participants under the age of fifteen (15)."

Work Days/Hours

Work only between one (1) hour after sunup and one (1) hour before sundown. Do not work if weather conditions cause poor visibility.

Parking Area(s)

This is part of the site inspection. The agreement says, "Participants must park private vehicles only in areas designated by the department." Park off the shoulder of the roadway.

Recommendation: Minimize parking problems by car-pooling.

Clothing

Safety Vests

Everyone must wear the Department safety vest or an alternative of two hundred (200) square inches of fluorescent blaze orange such as a vest or shirt. Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) will furnish vests, which must be picked up during business hours.

Proper Foot Wear

Participants must wear shoes or boots, not sandals or thongs. Stress the types of hazards that could be encountered – glass, nails, cactus, and stubble.

Hats/Gloves

Hats will prevent sunburn and help the ability to see. Gloves protect from splinters, glass and other hazards.

Pants/Shirts

Wear long sleeve shirts and pants. They help prevent sunburn, insect bites, cuts, scrapes and abrasions.

Work Signs

Purpose

Warning signs (Men Working, Litter Cleanup Ahead, Work Crew, etc.) are to be put up on either end of the assigned stretch of adopted road. Signs alert drivers that people are out there working. The signs are there for the protection of the group.

Location

Everyone needs to know where the signs are.

Responsibility for Opening and Closing Signs

The signs must be put in place before anyone starts work. Double check to see that the signs are up before work starts, and that they are taken down after work is finished.

Work Methods

Proper Lifting

Improper lifting causes back injuries. When lifting, bend at the knees and lift with the legs. If the material is too big, do not try to lift it alone. Do not fill bags too full.

Awareness of Traffic and Traffic Speed

The public highway is a dangerous environment. Do not pick up trash on roadways, bridges or on overpasses. Also avoid underpasses in areas of heavy traffic.

Crossing Methods and Locations

Stay on one side of the road and do not cross back and forth. Watch children carefully and do not let them get into the roadway or let them cross by themselves. Pick locations to cross that are visible to drivers. Plan a way to cross as a group.

Face or Work Toward Traffic

Face the traffic while working so you are able to see what on-coming cars are doing.

Personal Risk

Emphasize that highways are a dangerous place to work. The risks include traffic danger, injury while picking up litter, heat exhaustion, and sunburn. Avoid areas that have been sprayed with herbicides. Do not pick up syringes or hypodermic needles. In certain areas, watch for rattlesnakes, noxious weeds, and insects (give debris a kick if there is any doubt). Do not remove dead animals or any suspicious containers that may have hazardous materials in them. Notify the Department about suspicious materials. The agreement says, "The group agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Department and its employees from all liability, judgment, costs, expenses, and claims of any nature whatsoever to any person or property arising out of the performance or non-performance of their work."

Bag Placement

The department will furnish the trash bags. Department employees will pick up the filled trash bags. Bags need to be placed off the shoulder of the road. The bags could be placed by a delineator (Delineators are markers with a reflector that are used to mark the edge of the shoulder). The bags should not be compacted or filled too full.

Refreshments

Water Location and Responsibility

The agreement says, "Each group shall be responsible for maintaining adequate drinking water." Choose a location for the water that is on the same side of the road and near where the group is working.

Lunch

Lunch is up to the group to handle. Pick a safe location for the group to be while eating.

No Alcohol/Drugs

The agreement says, "Each group shall be responsible for prohibiting participants from either possessing or consuming drugs or alcoholic beverages during the trash pickup or other maintenance/beautification work." Anyone who has been drinking/doing drugs must be sent away from the work site.

Other Discussion Items

First Aid Kits Responsibility and Location

The agreement says, "Each group shall be responsible for maintaining a first aid kit." Each group needs to have a person who is trained in first aid. The group should discuss the following problems: how to prevent, and how to treat cuts, bruises, breaks, sprains, strains, sunburn, insect bites, and snake bites. The group should also discuss the symptoms of heat exhaustion/sun stroke and how to prevent it.

Emergency Notification Procedures

Be prepared for serious injuries. Where will the group go to call for help or take a person for emergency care? Who in the group will be responsible for calling for help? Transportation needs to be immediately available. The group could notify local authorities that they are working – give location, date, time, etc.