



#TeamWilder Educator Toolkit: Our Guide to Safely Picking Litter

Whether you're wanting to carry out a litter pick on your school grounds or a beach clean in your local area, we've compiled some advice as to how to do this safely.

Equipment:

- Thick gardening gloves
- Strong bin bags
- A litter picker
- A high-vis vest or brightly coloured clothing
- Suitable clothing (e.g., plenty of layers in case it's cold, or suncream and a hat if it's sunny)
- Suitable footwear (e.g., sturdy boots for rocky or muddy areas)
- Hand sanitiser

Litter picking equipment can be borrowed from many [local authorities](#). Equipment can also be purchased for [individuals](#) or for [groups](#) from Keep Britain Tidy.

Before Your Litter Pick:

Before carrying out a litter pick, make sure that you have taken the weather into consideration, along with the tide times if you are undertaking a beach clean, and that you have plenty of water with you to drink.

Make sure to take regular breaks and only carry out what is within your personal capabilities. Those under the age of 18 years old should be supervised by a responsible adult during a litter pick. You should ensure that you have permission from the landowner before going onto any land; if you are attending an organised litter pick, the organiser should have done this for you prior to the start of the event.

Health and Safety:

If you attend an organised litter pick, your organiser should have undertaken a risk assessment and should provide you with a safety briefing. The organiser should be first-aid trained and have a first



aid kit with them. If you are organising a litter pick with the public, ensure that you have public liability insurance in place to protect yourself and the group.

Always ask the organiser of the litter pick or a responsible adult if you're not sure whether something is safe to pick up. Dangerous, poisonous, or hazardous items should be reported to the Environment Agency on 0800 807 060. Never lift anything too heavy for you; heavy items should instead be reported and removed by the local council. Ensure you always wear thick gloves and cover any cuts, no matter how small, with a waterproof plaster. Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth while litter picking and make sure to wash your hands afterwards, particularly before eating, drinking, smoking, or using the toilet.

Things to avoid:

- Sharp objects such as broken glass – these should be collected in separate containers, not rubbish bags.
- Medical waste such as needles or syringes. Do not attempt to move these yourself – make a note of their location and inform your local council.
- Potentially hazardous items, including unidentified canisters, oil drums, chemical containers, and bottles of liquid.
- Dead animals – report any dead whales or dolphins to Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (0800 652 0333) or other dead animals to the local authority.
- Live animals – report any live strandings to British Divers Marine Life Rescue (01825 765546) or other injured animals to RSPCA (0300 1234999).
- Hazardous areas such as steep or unstable banks, derelict buildings, busy roads, or near fast flowing or deep water.
- Working alone – stay within sight and earshot of others or, if litter picking alone, let someone know where you've gone and what time to expect you back.

Disposing of Your Litter

Try not to overfill your rubbish bags to avoid the bags splitting. If possible, separate your litter into different bags for recycling, such as:

- Plastic bottles
- Glass
- Cans
- Paper
- General waste



All waste should either be placed securely in a public bin or collected by the local authority.

If you do plan to collect a large amount of litter, speak to your local authority in advance of your litter pick to get advice about what to do with it. If you have arranged for the waste to be collected by the local authority, make sure all bags are sealed and left in the agreed location. As a last resort, rubbish collected during a litter pick can be transported in a private vehicle to a local household waste recycling site, however you must make sure that the site can accept the waste.

Credit to Keep Britain Tidy, Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership and Wildlife Watch.

