



**FULTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION**

**COMMUNITY-BASED CLEANUP
GUIDELINE**



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WHY A COMMUNITY-BASED CLEANUP?

It is important that our communities exist as places where we can live, work, and play with out **nuisances**. However, if one takes a look at the communities around Fulton County, he or she could identify areas that are a blight to the at large community. Many of these communities are littered with trash and debris partially as a result of illegal dumping of **solid waste**. Unfortunately, illegal dumping of solid waste is a burden heavily born by the underserved, at risk communities, causing unsafe and unhealthy conditions that affect the immediate community and Fulton County as a whole. Fulton County Government is committed to seeing that **environmental justice** is served throughout all of its communities, which means every community has equal access to all services and does not bear an unequal burden from any health or environmental impacts associated with policies, regulations, or ordinances.

The Fulton County Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD), through its Community Sanitation Program, receives solid waste complaints and provides enforcement of the Fulton County Code of Ordinances and Code of Resolutions. While EHSD addresses not only solid waste problems, but also issues involving rodent control, mosquito control, and West Nile Virus, the efforts of EHSD alone cannot meet the complete need of the various neighborhoods of Fulton County. In order to achieve a step toward **sustainability**, it is important that neighbors take ownership of their communities. Part of environmental justice is the participation of the community in services that affect them.

So, why have a community cleanup in your community? It brings:

- Improved aesthetics;
- Awareness of community issues;
- Usability for residents;
- Cohesiveness among community members;
- Reduction in criminal activities;
- Attraction for business;
- Attraction for future residents; and
- **Healthier community!**

“Nuisance means whatever is dangerous or detrimental to human life or health and whatever renders or tends to render soil, water or food impure or unwholesome.”

Definition as noted in the Fulton County Code of Ordinances and Code of Resolutions, Chapter 34 – Health and Sanitation, Article X – Solid Waste.

“Solid waste includes those waste materials in solid form resulting from public, domestic or commercial enterprise, which must be disposed in an approved manner. The term includes litter, trash, refuse, rubble and other common terms. The term excludes sewage, septage and liquid wastes in general (except for liquid or semi-liquid products of refuse decomposition), sewage sludge and inert materials.” Definition as noted in the Fulton County Code of Ordinances and Code of Resolutions, Chapter 34 – Health and Sanitation, Article X – Solid Waste.

Environmental Justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Definition as noted on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website (<http://www.epa.gov/oecaerth/EnvironmentalJustice>).

Sustainability in a public policy perspective means satisfaction of basic economic, social, and security needs now and in the future without undermining the natural resource base and environmental quality on which life depends. Definition as noted on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website (<http://epa.gov/sustainability/basicinfo.htm>).

HOW TO ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY CLEANUP

No matter who you are, it is important to begin your community cleanup on the right track. These instructions are to guide you to avoid the mistakes often experienced by first-time cleanup efforts. This information is only a guide, and you may find that adjustments are necessary to fit the needs of your community. The instruction numbers coincide with the numbers on the COMMUNITY EVENT TIMELINE/CHECKLIST (page 6), which you may use in conjunction with these instructions to plainly see the items that you must accomplish, to establish deadlines for you and your community, and to track your progress.

1. Plan a Community Meeting.

In order to begin on the right track, having the “buy-in” of your community members is critical. If you are an individual or small group, start out by contacting your established community organization (i.e. Neighborhood Planning Unit, neighborhood association, or homeowners association) to discuss your proposal to have a community cleanup and to request scheduling a community meeting to discuss the need for and to solicit support for a community cleanup. In that preliminary conversation, it is important to determine who will spearhead the preliminary meeting efforts. Remember you want your community organization supporting you, and it is important to present a unified group to the other community members and to any other persons that you will encounter along the way. If the organization wants to take the responsibility, allow them to do so, but remain willing to provide assistance. The designated leader of this event must remember to delegate duties. No one person should be assigned or take on too many responsibilities. The key is to designate responsible persons able to handle each task.

Once preliminary roles have been established, proceed with determining a date for an initial meeting. When a date has been selected, it is recommended that you invite Fulton County Environmental Health Services representatives as well as the code enforcement division of your municipality. These governmental officials can provide fact-based information and expertise to answer questions raised by the community members, which would be helpful in swaying the community to hold the cleanup event. Your request to government representatives should be two (2) to three (3) weeks prior to the meeting. Make sure to confirm their plans to attend your meeting at three (3) days to one (1) week prior to the meeting. Preparing a simple agenda for the meeting is suggested.

2. Conduct a Preliminary Community Meeting

The following goals should be met during your preliminary community meeting:

- Provide fact-based information (*County and municipal representatives*)
- Emphasize the need for the community cleanup
- Decision by community members whether or not to have cleanup event
- Discuss potential boundaries for the cleanup area (*Cleanup boundary area should be of appropriate size as to have sufficient support to see significant results in the time limit allotted.*)
- Develop a cleanup event committee

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3. Create a Survey Area Map.

The map should show cleanup area boundaries, streets, blocks, etc. The map will be a working tool through the event day. As you move forward, the boundaries may need to be modified for one reason or another.

4. Survey the Cleanup Area.

A survey of the cleanup areas should be conducted to observe and document the areas and addresses of properties with special concern due to hazards, safety, accessibility, etc. If there are areas within the proposed cleanup area boundaries that pose a health or safety risk, those areas should not be approached alone. Community members should enlist the assistance of trained and knowledgeable persons concerning particular hazards such as code enforcement officials, Fulton County Environmental Health Specialists, police, fire, etc. If the proposed cleanup area has properties that are places for illegal dumping of items such as building materials and scrap tires, consult with Fulton County Environmental Health Services for guidance on handling, removal, and disposal. This time would be good for taking pictures that document the situation prior to the clean-up (“before” pictures).

5. Conduct a Follow-up Community Meeting.

This meeting should inform community members of the following:

- Survey findings (data and pictures);
- Expert information concerning problem areas; and
- Recommendation of boundary areas.

Community members should also be given the opportunity to provide input on other issues not already noted. During this meeting, a cleanup event date should be established. The date chosen should allow for three (3) months of planning. A rain date should also be chosen at this time. When scheduling your event, be sure to consider seasons, holidays, and other major events. Take note that scheduling your event to coincide with other events such as that of Earth Day or the Great American Cleanup will put emphasis on your event and provide opportunity for added support for supplies, volunteers, media coverage, etc. Commitment is key to the success of you event, so supply a contact list for people to sign up to help.

6. Create an Inventory List.

Make a list of things you will need as well as persons and organizations to contact. The INVENTORY LIST on page 7 provides recommendations. While determining the needs for the event, it is recommended that this time be used to assign tasks to obtain these things and accomplish the necessary tasks.

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7. Obtain Funding for the Community Cleanup.

Estimate the cost of your planning and community cleanup event day needs. Plan how those costs will be covered. You can solicit financial support from grants, local businesses, churches, and community organizations (approximately eight to ten weeks prior to your scheduled event). You may also consider requesting supplies on your inventory list instead of money. It is recommended that you have monetary commitments no later than six (6) weeks prior to the event and monies available no later than one (1) month prior to the event.

8. Conduct a Community Update Meeting

Schedule and conduct a community update meeting to inform the community members of the status of the planning. This meeting is the time to keep people motivated, to request addition assistance, and to get feedback. You must have momentum through the support of your community so keep them involved in the process, interested in their community, and wanting change. Community update meetings should be held every two (2) to three weeks. E-mails and calling posts are an efficient way to keep everyone in the loop. However, meeting is important also for those that do not have access to receive information this way. The planning committee should meet more frequently and as needed.

9. Make Requests for Support and Submit Applications.

After establishing a plan and identifying funding and community resources, contact your Public Works Department to request its services in trash pickup and for solid waste containers on the day of the event. The availability of Public Works is critical to your event. However, if the trash is in amounts which are easily handled by regular garbage pickup, it is recommended that you utilize that existing service.

Make official requests (phone call, letter, e-mail, or a combination) to Fulton County Environmental Health Services, your local Code Enforcement, Police Department, Fire Department, local permitting offices, volunteer organizations, political/public officials, etc. Your request should include:

- Event Name;
- Event Date;
- Rain Date;
- Event Location;
- Cleanup Area/Boundaries;
- Staging Site;
- Service/Assistance Requested;
- Formal Processes, Applications, etc. Information;
- Other Services/Assistance Available Information;
- Your Name and/or Organization; and
- Your Contact Information.

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Inquire about potential free support for assistance and supplies that these groups and organizations such as the local Keep America Beautiful affiliate nearest your community will provide.

The requests should be made eight (8) to ten (10) weeks prior to the scheduled community cleanup event.

10. Obtain Confirmation and Approvals.

You should have all confirmations and/or approvals from six (6) weeks prior to the event. If you have not gotten a response by this time, check on the status with those persons to whom you sent the requests and/or applications. Verify that you have identified and contacted the correct person. Attempt to have all confirmations and approvals no later than four (4) weeks prior to the community cleanup event.

11. Advertise event.

Four (4) weeks before your event you should advertise your community cleanup event. Advertisements should be for your community members, your support group, and the general population. Be selective and strategic in your placement and distribution of flyers. Flyers oftentimes become litter. Advertisements should include confirmed supporters and endorsers. Continue your advertisement until the day prior to your event.

12. Place Media Requests.

If you decide to place a media (television, radio, newspaper, etc.) request, do so three (3) to four (4) weeks prior to the event. Specific instruction can be obtained directly from the medium you choose to utilize.

13. Draft or Obtain Volunteer and Media Waivers.

Waivers should be drafted or obtained at least three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled community cleanup event. Samples of volunteer (liability) waivers and media waivers can be obtained from your local library or from the internet. However, seek legal advice before utilizing any binding contract. Have blank waivers available on event day for all of your volunteers to complete and sign.

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14. Send Information Packet to Volunteers.

Approximately three (3) weeks prior to your event, you should provide basic information to the volunteers to prepare them for event day. That information should include instructions and warnings.

Attire and skin protection:

- Wear appropriate attire (long-sleeved shirt, long-legged pants, socks, closed-toe shoes with thick soles).
- Wear sunscreen.
- Wear bug repellent.

Health Safety:

- Remember to bring and take all prescribed medications for certain health conditions (i.e. high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.).
- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.
- Take breaks as needed to avoid physical exhaustion.
- Seek shade and cool off as needed to avoid heat exhaustion.
- Wash hands with soap and use sanitizer (both provided) after cleanup activities and prior to consuming food onsite.
- Wear sunscreen.
- Bring/wear insect repellent.

Personal safety:

- Watch for any potential hazards.
- Do not pick up hazardous materials that could cause injury or transference of disease through puncture, inhalation, absorption through skin, etc. (objects with sharp edges, pointy items, hypodermic needles, condoms, stray animals, animal carcasses, chemicals, unidentifiable items, etc.).
- Do not lift heavy objects.
- Stay alert and observant of your surroundings.
- Do not work alone (work in assigned groups).
- Report suspicious or illegal activity to event organizer.
- Do not attempt to handle situations on your own.

Cleanup Activities:

- Follow all directions given.
- Do not be, provide, or allow distractions to the cleanup activities.
- Report illegal or criminal activities or evidence of such activities.

Also, provide information that all volunteers will be required to sign a volunteer (liability) waiver and a media waiver. To save postage, information can be sent via e-mail. If you have volunteers that do not have e-mail access or did not attend the community meeting where this information was addressed, you may elect to mail the information to them. If volunteers are a part of an organization that is supporting your event, you can provide a copy to the organization for it to distribute.

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15. Confirm Attendance/Participation and Obtain List of Volunteers and Supporters.

One (1) week prior to the community cleanup event you should have a list of all volunteers and supporters for your event. During the week up to three (3) or four (4) days prior to your event, it is recommended that you contact all individuals and organizations of volunteers and supporters to confirm the event day is scheduled to happen and to confirm their attendance. If for any reason, your event is canceled, contact all of your volunteers and supporters and remind them of the rain date.

16. Finalize Event Day Details.

By no later than one (1) week prior to the community cleanup, you should have all details finalized including, but not exclusive to:

- Assigning cleanup group leaders;
- Assigning volunteers to groups;
- Mapping clean up territories;
- Assigning groups to territories; and
- Providing supplies.

17. Community Cleanup Event Day

Do not forget to document the event day with pictures and/or video.

Remember to delegate tasks appropriately.

Start on time, which is very important. A late start or poor preparation will discourage participants. Be ready and available to greet the participants to energize and to motivate them.

Prior to the arrival of the cleanup volunteers and supporter:

- Verify all supplies onsite (See Community Cleanup Event Day Checklist, page 13.).
- Set up staging area.
- Post signs.
- Give last minute instructions to coordinating group.

Once the volunteers and supporters arrive:

- Route them to check-in to sign waivers and receive supplies.
- Divide volunteers into pre-assigned groups.
- Distribute maps to group leaders.
- Reiterate health and safety instructions previously distributed (See page 8 in the Health Safety and Personal Safety information, which can be used as talking points.) as well as any additional information specific to your event. Be sure to be clear and stress the

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importance and necessity of volunteers not working alone and to report any suspicious or illegal activity to the organizer. You want your event to be a successful one, which means preparing the participants so as not to have an incident.

When serving food, it is recommended that you ensure the safety of public health by:

- Making sure food handlers are not participating in cleanup activities.
- Making certain food handlers wash hands with soap and water;
- Making sure that food handlers wear gloves or use clean utensils;
- Keeping all cold foods at 41°F or lower (or serve food within four hours of preparation);
- Keeping all hot foods at 135°F or higher (or serve food within four hours of preparation);
- Using single-service condiment packages; and
- Using single-service utensils.

Upon completion of the event,

- Verify all volunteers have returned to the staging area and checked out.
- Verify pickup of the trash bags.
- Clean up staging area.

CLEANUP EVENT TIMELINE/CHECKLIST

The following table is to assist you in the planning of your cleanup by providing a means to record target dates of your proposed planning activities and the actual dates of completion. This table should be used in conjunction with the community cleanup instructions, *HOW TO ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY CLEANUP*, beginning on page three (3) of this document.

✓	ACTIVITY	TARGET DATE	ACTUAL DATE
	1. Plan community meeting to discuss having a community cleanup. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact your established community organization (if applicable). <input type="checkbox"/> Determine meeting date. <input type="checkbox"/> Request presences of Fulton County Environmental Health Services, Education and/or Community Sanitation representatives. <input type="checkbox"/> Request presence of Municipal Code Enforcement. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare agenda (optional) <input type="checkbox"/> Receive confirmation from Fulton County and municipal representatives.		
	2. Conduct a preliminary community meeting.		
	3. Create a survey area map.		
	4. Survey the cleanup area.		
	5. Conduct a follow-up community meeting.		
	6. Create an inventory list.		
	7. Obtain funding for the community event.		
	8. Conduct a community update meeting.		
	9. Make requests for support and submit applications. <input type="checkbox"/> Fulton County or Municipal Public Works <input type="checkbox"/> Fulton County Environmental Health Services <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Code Compliance/Enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> Fulton County or municipal permitting <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Others		
	10. Obtain confirmations and approvals. <input type="checkbox"/> Fulton County or Municipal Public Works <input type="checkbox"/> Fulton County Environmental Health Services <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Code Compliance/Enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> Fulton County or municipal permitting <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Others		
	11. Advertise event.		
	12. Place media requests (optional).		
	13. Draft/obtain volunteer and media waivers.		
	14. Send information packet to volunteers.		
	15. Confirm attendance/participation and obtain list of volunteers and supporters.		
	16. Finalize event day details.		
	17. Community Cleanup Event Day		

INVENTORY LIST

The following items are recommended to have on hand for your community cleanup event day. Other items should be added according to your specific need.

Supplies:

- First aid kit (for 15+ people)
- Thick Gloves
- Safety Vests
- Trash Bags
- Extended arm trash grabber
- Camera and/or video camera (for documenting the event day)
- Signs
- Tables (for staging area)
- Chairs (five or six for staging area)
- Pens
- Tent
- Food
- Ice
- Water
- Drinks
- Single-service Utensils
- Single-service Cups
- Appropriate equipment to cooking, cold hold, or hot hold food
- Soap Dispensers
- Hand Sanitizers
- Paper Towels/Napkins
- Single-service Rubber Gloves for Food Handling
- Cooler(s)
- Cooler with spout (for food handlers to wash hands)
- Megaphone
- Cell phone

Support:

- Volunteers
- Fulton County Department of Health Services
- Code Enforcement
- Public Works
- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Media (optional)

Miscellaneous:

- Participation Waiver
- Media Waiver (if media to be present)

CLEANUP EVENT DAY CHECKLIST

The following are recommended items that you should have ready and available for your community cleanup.

- Table(s)
- Tent(s)
- Chair(s)
- First aid kit for at least 15+ people
- Trash bags
- Extended arm trash grabber
- Camera and/or video camera
- Signs
- Food
- Ice
- Water
- Drinks
- Single-service utensils
- Single-service cups
- Hand sanitizers
- Soap pumps/dispensers
- Paper towels/napkins
- Cold holding and/or hot holding equipment for food
- Cooler(s)
- Cooler with spout filled with water
- Single-service rubber gloves
- Megaphone
- Cell phone
- Participation waiver forms
- Media waiver forms
- Sign-in sheets
- Pens
- Safety Instructions
- Activated cell phone (person available at all times with cell phone)
- List of cleanup zones and assigned workers
- Thick gloves for each worker/volunteer
- Safety vests or bright-colored clothing (applicable for roadside cleanups)

AFTER THE COMMUNITY CLEANUP EVENT

The following are recommended activities for your community during the days after the community cleanup event is complete.

One (1) – three (3) days:

- Survey the cleanup boundary areas.
- Take pictures of the end results.
- Schedule community cleanup committee meeting to evaluate your event.

One (1) – two (2) weeks:

Conduct a community cleanup committee meeting to evaluate your community cleanup event. The following questions should be posed and answered:

- What progress was made?
- Where the target problems resolved?
- What mistakes were made?
- What should be done differently for future cleanups?
- Is there another community cleanup event needed?
- Was the project sustainable?
- What beautification project should the community plan?
- Are there problems/issues that still require expert assistance?
- Was the event a success?



Two (2) – four (4) weeks:

After a complete evaluation, share your findings with the entire community. Provide an opportunity for community members to provide their feedback on the community cleanup efforts.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about or need assistance with your community cleanup efforts, you may contact this Department by the information below.

**Fulton County Department of Health Services
Environmental Health Services Division**

Community Sanitation/West Nile Virus Program

99 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, 1st Floor

Atlanta, GA 30303

TEL: 404-730-1301

FAX: 404-730-1462

Website: <http://www.fultoncountygga.gov/county/health>

Programs: Community Sanitation (Solid Waste, Rat Control, Mosquito/West Nile Virus, & Nuisance), Food Service, Tourist Accommodations, Swimming Pools, Onsite Sewage Management Systems, & Onsite Water Supply Systems.

