



# F is for Friends Who Clean Up Together!:

## How to Organize a Cleanup in Your Neighborhood



SpongeBob SquarePants: Operation Sea Change and Ocean Conservancy teamed up to help you organize a cleanup in your neighborhood.

Trash travels. Rain can wash plastic bottles, food wrappers and other trash out to sea. Wind can blow plastic bags and other lightweight items around and away into lakes, rivers and the ocean.

Whether you live under a rock, along a riverbank, or even in a pineapple under the sea, your cleanup helps reduce the amount of plastic in the environment. After all, the best time to clean up the ocean is alllll the time!

There's power in numbers, so joining an existing cleanup in your area is a great idea. You can check out Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup® map to find cleanup events already happening in your area.

But if you rather start your own event, here are eight steps to get you cleaning in no time:

### PRE CLEAN UP

#### 1. PICK A LOCATION AND SPREAD THE WORD

Identify a location that is safe to clean for the people who will be joining in the cleanup. Is there too much car, bike or other traffic? Are there rocks or other natural elements that might make it difficult for some people to navigate? Think ahead about where you will properly dispose of trash at the location you choose. Are there public trash bins nearby, or will you have to haul everything home?

#### 2. GATHER MATERIALS

You'll definitely need gloves as well as trash bags or other containers (buckets are a great, reusable option!). But you may also want to have grabbers and – for after the cleanup – hand sanitizer ready, too. Make sure to stay safe and hydrated by wearing sunscreen and closed-toe shoes and packing a reusable water bottle.

#### 3. CLEAN UP

Safely collect trash using gloves and, if you have them, grabbers. Don't forget to take pictures to document your efforts. Never pick up any trash items that you are not comfortable with.



### POST CLEAN UP

#### 4. WASH UP

After you finish collecting items, carefully remove gloves and wash hands and arms with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



#### 6. PROPERLY DISPOSE OF ITEMS COLLECTED

If using trash bags, close them off. Remember that most trash collected out of the environment cannot be recycled. Do not place trash bags in overflowing bins. This may cause items to fly away and end up back in the water..

#### 5. SUBMIT YOUR DATA

Cleanups can provide important data about the types and amount of trash polluting our environment, and organizations like Ocean Conservancy use this data to advocate for solutions to the plastic pollution crisis. By downloading Ocean Conservancy's Clean Swell® application on your phone or other smart device you are contributing to the world's biggest database on plastic pollution.

#### 7. PACK UP FOR NEXT TIME

Immediately and thoroughly sanitize any gear used during the cleanup including grabbers, gloves and buckets.

Ocean Conservancy has led the fight for a clean, healthy ocean free of trash since 1986, when it first launched its annual International Coastal Cleanup®, the world's largest volunteer cleanup effort for the ocean. The organization continues to work to protect the ocean from today's greatest global challenges, creating evidence-based solutions for a healthy ocean and the wildlife and communities that depend on it. For more information, visit [www.oceanconservancy.org](http://www.oceanconservancy.org).

[SpongeBobOperationSeaChange.com](http://SpongeBobOperationSeaChange.com)