

Litter Cleanup Tips for Self-Directed Volunteers

When an individual, family or small group wishes to pick up park litter, we offer these ten tips. *Please note, however, that any park litter clean-up done outside of FOLFAN's supervision, safety training and signed liability waivers is not a sanctioned FOLFAN activity. So you are choosing to take full responsibility for whatever risks are associated with the activity. These litter cleanup tips assume you are taking full responsibility for any risks associated with the cleanup activity.*

TEN LITTER CLEANUP TIPS

1. Have the proper tools: A glove and a trash bag is the minimum, but a "grabber" tool is very helpful. A five-gallon bucket is also helpful, especially when picking up broken glass or sharp objects that may tear apart your garbage bag.
2. Wear proper clothing: Be aware of both weather and park conditions and wear clothing that protects you from the elements, including the sun, rain, insects and poisonous plants.
3. Stay hydrated: Water by itself is not enough! Better to have a beverage with a little bit of sugar, fat or protein to help you stay hydrated for longer. Or water with healthy snack bars will also work well.
4. Have a first aid kit nearby: You will rarely need it, but when you do, you'll be glad you had it! Be sure it includes band-aids, tweezers and all the usual supplies, plus antibiotic ointment and hydrocortisone or anti-itch cream. You should also have a skin cleanser that removes grime and the rash-causing oil (urushiol) from your skin if exposed to poison oak.
5. Stay on the trails and pathways and be aware of poison oak: Note that this doesn't guarantee you won't get exposed to poison oak, but going off-trails increases the odds of bringing the rash-causing oil (urushiol) home with you! Staying on the trails and pathways means you're going to be leaving some litter behind. But this is where a "grabber" tool can come in handy, as it allows you to reach out for litter than may be 5-6' from the trail.
6. Stay away from homeless encampments: Cleaning up illegal campsites and the trash that accompany them is a job for people with specialized training and law enforcement support (if needed). Do not take unnecessary risks yourself by messing with someone's "things." But definitely report illegal campsites to rangers or maintenance personnel, or call State Park's dispatch number (916-358-1300) and report it. A specific location is always appreciated.



7. Don't pick up needles or snakes: Picking up needles/syringes can lead to dangerous exposure or improper disposal (which then exposes others). Report to maintenance personnel exactly where you found the needles, or call the park's dispatch number (916-358-1300) and report it. Snakes, including rattlesnakes, are park residents. They shun human contact and only attack when directly provoked. Most rattlesnake bites are due to people inadvertently stepping on them. Please give our snakes a wide berth. Live and let live.

8. Dealing with dog poop and human waste: Dog poop can be scooped up using small plastic dog waste bags (or other small plastic bags repurposed for dog waste). Or use a disposable coffee cup that you have already picked up; use the lid to scoop the poop into the cup and put the cup in your garbage bag. If you come across human waste (as evidenced by toilette paper/wipes nearby), please don't mess with it; simply report its specific location to maintenance personnel or call State Park's dispatch number (916-358-1300) and report it.

9. Dispose of your trash bags and litter collection in a trash receptacle. If the trash receptacle is full, set the bag down next to the receptacle. Please do not fill a bag with litter and then drop it on the side of a road or trail expecting someone else to come pick it up for you. The same goes for dog waste bags. If you really want to help with our litter problem, please use our park's trash receptacles.



10. Wash up afterward: If you were (or may have been) exposed to poison oak, put all exposed clothing (including shoes) in the washer with soap and hot water. The initial washing of your hands and arms (and legs and feet, if exposed) should be with unheated water and soap. Use a skin cleanser (mentioned in #4) if you have it. If you develop a rash or itch, be sure the area has been cleaned and use calamine lotion or hydrocortisone cream to help stop the itching. Antihistamine tablets such as Benadryl or Zyrtec can also help to reduce itching. Shoes and dogs are common ways that the oil from poison oak gets shared without people realizing how they got it or who gave it to them.