



# Volunteer Handbook



Become a Clean and Green Champion

**Sign up today!**

**GREAT PARKS MAKE  
GREAT NEIGHBOURHOODS**





## **What is the Adopt-A-Park Program?**

The Adopt-a-Park Program is a year-round program for volunteers to help maintain and care for trees and shrub beds in their local parks, dog parks, green spaces, woodlots and trails. The goal of the Adopt-a-Park program is to engage volunteers and community groups in becoming Clean and Green Champions while creating and preserving green spaces to contribute to the City of Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan and the Litter and Waste Strategies. Volunteer cleanup and beautification efforts support Climate Change actions, which create great parks and clean and green neighbourhoods!

## **How it Works**

Adopt-a-Park groups sign up and agree to care for a park or green space for three years. The group hosts litter clean ups remove or reports graffiti, organizes events, engages place making, stewardship, cares for shrub beds and trees at least four times each year.

## **Benefits of Adopting a Park or Green Space**

Volunteer commitment to local neighborhoods is crucial in keeping our green spaces clean, safe and beautiful. A beautiful and vibrant neighborhood park or green space attracts citizens, volunteers, clean and green champions, increases engagement, stewardship and pride in the neighbourhood.

Participating Adopt-A-Park groups receive an Adopt-A-Park sign with the group's Name, message or logo; in recognition of the group's efforts.

As an Adopt-a-Park group you can:

- 🌱 Help beautify parks, green spaces and community
- 🌱 Support small food gardens, pollinator patches and medicine gardens
- 🌱 Animate park and green spaces through art and events
- 🌱 Gain a sense of collective community goals and civic pride
- 🌱 Help preserve natural spaces and resources
- 🌱 Help reduce crime and vandalism
- 🌱 Lead by example and become a Clean and Green Champion



## **The City of Hamilton Roles & Responsibilities**

The City will:

- 🌱 Lead by example in keeping Hamilton clean & green!
- 🌱 Provide regular maintenance in all City parks and green spaces
- 🌱 Help you choose a park or green space and determine needed improvements
- 🌱 Provide support to Adopt-a-Park groups when needed, including volunteer support, networking, troubleshooting and safety training
- 🌱 Refer you to small grants, resources and community partners
- 🌱 Receive and review inquiries and incident reports
- 🌱 Provide the tools you'll need for a successful clean-up (litter & recycling bags, gloves, yard waste bags and safety information)
- 🌱 Pick up garbage, recycling, and yard waste if needed

## **How to Adopt-a-Park**

Fill out the application form at [www.hamilton.ca/adoptapark](http://www.hamilton.ca/adoptapark)

The City will contact you to complete the process of adopting a green space.

Requests are processed on a first come, first served basis. If more than one group requests the same park at the same time, depending on the size of the park, more than one group can adopt the same park. The City of Hamilton makes the final decision to allow a group to adopt a park / green space.

## **Volunteer Responsibilities & Terms**

- 🌳 Become familiar with all the documents located in the online Adopt-A-Park Digital Tool Box: Volunteer Handbook, Health and Safety Tip Sheet, Event Leader and Volunteer Participation Waiver, Volunteer Training PowerPoint presentation and the Photograph / Video Consent, Release and Waiver
- 🌳 Be sure to print off the Event Leader and Volunteer Participation Waiver. As the event organizer, you must have all your volunteers review and sign the waiver when they show up to your event. You will need this if there are any issues with your event.



- 🌳 It is the responsibility of the group representative to assure all volunteers have received safety training before they participate
- 🌳 Register on Team up to Clean up website, at minimal 2 weeks before your clean up date to receive Adopt A Park clean up supplies, gloves, recycle, garbage and leaf and yard waste bags
- 🌳 Complete the Sharing Success Report annually
- 🌳 Pick up garbage, recycling, and yard waste if needed
- 🌳 If you're planning an event, more than 15 people (more than just a cleanup) in your adopted park, be sure to contact Recreation Facilities: [Recreation Facility Rentals | City of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada](#)
- 🌳 Appoint or select a group leader to act on behalf of the group
- 🌳 Oblige by all laws and regulations relating to safety and such terms and conditions as may be required by the City
- 🌳 Plan for off road parking or shuttle bus-type transportation
- 🌳 Provide supervision, safety equipment and First aid service
- 🌳 Host a cleanup at least four (4) times each year, at least one clean up should be in the Fall
- 🌳 Request and spread woodchips every other year in the Fall or as required
- 🌳 Wear a city-approved safety vest when near a roadway
- 🌳 Wear appropriate safety apparel during the clean-up; such as safety glasses and protective gloves (if required)
- 🌳 Do not pick up litter on roads, paved or gravel shoulders, medians, bridges, tunnels, overpasses, or around other structures or locations that could pose a danger
- 🌳 Wear clothing that will not impair vision or movement
- 🌳 Ensure that no individual under the age of eighteen (18) is present without a parent or guardian's permission
- 🌳 Ensure no volunteer possesses or consumes illegal drugs or alcohol immediately before or during an Adopt-a-Park clean up
- 🌳 Suspend Adopt-a-Park activities when weather conditions become inclement (i.e. fog, heavy rain, drizzle, high wind, electrical storms, etc.)
- 🌳 Ensure that pets are on a leash and that no potentially dangerous animals are present that could inflict injury or disease



- 🌳 Flag closed containers, heavy objects, or suspicious hazardous materials for pick-up and disposal by City staff
- 🌳 Ensure that no inappropriate signs, posters, or other display materials are posted in the adopted park during or between clean-ups
- 🌳 Put garbage bags in the Park garbage cans or at designated pick-up site(s) as pre-arranged by the City and the group representative
- 🌳 Notify the City immediately after each clean-up to have excessive garbage bags, bulk items and debris removed
- 🌳 Return all inventory to the City at the end of an Adopt-A-Park Agreement unless it is renewed. Failure to do so will result in the group or individual being billed for the replacement value of the items

### **Adopt-A-Park Agreements**

- ⚡ The City of Hamilton administers and renews Adopt-A-Park agreements
- ⚡ Agreements are signed by the appointed group leader once every three years or as needed
- ⚡ The City of Hamilton has the right to terminate an agreement if an Adopt-A-Park group does not meet the terms and conditions of the agreement. The City may establish other procedures and requirements for the administration of its Adopt- a-Park program at any time

### **Before your Adopt-A-Park Clean Up**

- 🌿 Ensure that all participants complete the volunteer participant list. Participants under 18 years of age must have the signature of their parent or guardian
- 🌿 Ensure that you have discussed the safety tips and regulations. Identify, evaluate and eliminate Health & Safety risks to ensure that hazards are managed
- 🌿 Make sure you have all tools and materials required to complete your clean up safely and efficiently. Check that your equipment is in good working condition



- 🍃 If you're planning an event in addition to your clean up or a standalone event, planning a B.B.Q, a fundraiser or serving food, be sure to notify Recreation
- 🍃 Facilities at [Recreation Facility Rentals | City of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada](#), they will determine if you require a Community S.E.A.T application
- 🍃 If serving food, ensure that you're following Public Health Guidelines and that one of your representatives has a valid Food Handlers Certificate and is onsite.

### **After your Clean Up**

- 🍃 Ensure that your group leader keeps the participant lists
- 🍃 Share pictures and participant quotes

### **Safety First!**

It is important that all Adopt A Park volunteers have read the Safety Tip Sheet and understand what to do if they come across any hazardous items.

### **Safety Tips**

- ⚠️ Visit the cleanup location before your cleanup date to look for possible hazards
- ⚠️ Have young volunteers ask an adult first if they are unsure about picking up a piece of litter
- ⚠️ Make sure volunteers are safe during the event
- ⚠️ Wear bright clothing so volunteers can find you easily in an emergency
- ⚠️ Have all volunteers work in pairs or small groups
- ⚠️ Ensure all volunteers wear work gloves and closed toe shoes
- ⚠️ Use tools and equipment safely and as intended to avoid injury
- ⚠️ Remind volunteers to wash hands before eating and at the end of the day
- ⚠️ Keep sunscreen and insect repellent on hand
- ⚠️ Make sure all volunteers drink water and keep hydrated
- ⚠️ Ensure volunteers take breaks and do not over-exert themselves
- ⚠️ If you experience any injuries or illnesses during the clean-up, seek medical attention immediately and complete and incident report form
- ⚠️ Suspend the cleanup during bad weather (thunder and lightning)

### **Hazardous Items**



Do not allow volunteers to pick up anything that could be hazardous to their health. This includes, but is not limited to:

- ⊗ Hypodermic needles
- ⊗ Syringes
- ⊗ Urine bottles
- ⊗ Animal carcasses
- ⊗ Jagged glass or other sharp objects
- ⊗ Heavy objects
- ⊗ Air brakes



**\*If you come across any hazardous items, flag them and call 905-546-CITY (2489)\***

## **Emergency Response**

Charge and bring your mobile phone to call for help (9-1-1) in case of an emergency. After calling emergency services, please call (905) 546-2424 x1482 to report the incident to the City.

## **First Aid Kits**

You are required to supply your own first aid kit. The kit should be readily available and include, at a minimum, bandages, a compression bandage, antiseptic swabs and tweezers. A member of your group must be trained in basic first aid and emergency procedures to properly administer first aid. A first aid kit is provided in the Community Clean Trailer.

## **Planning Tips**

- 🌿 Be sure to register on the Team up to Clean up website, at least 2 weeks before your clean up, to ensure you get your clean up supplies in time
- 🌿 Organize a clean-up on Important dates, Equinoxes, Solstices, Earth Day,





- 🍃 Canada Day or your Birthday, be a clean and green champion on your birthday
- 🍃 Spread the word to your neighbors and people in your local community to get them excited about a park / green space clean up. Keep a list of those who have interest in helping and keep them informed of the time and day of the big clean up. A simple email list or a Facebook page will keep your group engaged
- 🍃 Tour the park / green space and observe the litter there. Determine how the litter will be disposed of: i.e. garbage, recyclable, leaf and yard waste. Leave hazardous material or bulk garbage for City staff to collect
- 🍃 Remove and recycle glass bottles before they are broken
- 🍃 Divide volunteers into groups and have some pick up litter, some remove graffiti, others weed or mulch pollinator patches, baby trees and shrub beds. Volunteers who are well organized, accomplish more
- 🍃 Use the Community Clean Trailer and the Clean & Green Trailer when possible. It has all the tools and equipment you will need to help make your park clean and green!



## **Community Clean Trailer**

The Community Clean Trailer and the Clean & Green Trailer is available to all Adopt-a-Park groups. The Community Clean Trailer and the Clean & Green Trailer has tools and supplies for litter clean up, graffiti removal, and beautification activities. Booking the Trailers are on a first come first served basis, so book early to avoid disappointment! Book at:





## **Ideas for Adopt-A-Park Groups**

Getting involved is easy. Your group could organize any or the following suggested activities:

- ✔ Clean and Green Champions: adopters host a cleanup event or environmental stewardship, climate change or biodiversity activity for youth to earn community service hours within their own community
- ✔ Plan litter cleanups, tree plantings, baby tree care and native flower plantings
- ✔ Organize a Biodiversity Speaker Series
- ✔ Organize a Tree Tour, share tree species and age of trees
- ✔ Organize a sustainable forge / foray, harvest seed, medicine, flowers and foods
- ✔ Organize a Native Species scavenger hunt, how many Ontario Native Species do you have in your Park?
- ✔ Organize and plant a small Food Garden, Pollinator Patch or Medicine Garden
- ✔ Host and monitor a 'park safety' or community watch program
- ✔ Host a community lawn or garden workshop in the park
- ✔ Host a Stoop and Scoop Dog Cafe
- ✔ Purchase or Fundraise to have a Commemorative Bench or Tree installed in your park or green space (The City of Hamilton Commemorative Bench and Tree Program)

Any one of these activities can provide Adopt-a-Park / Green Space Groups an opportunity to get active and contribute to environmental stewardship and the City of Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan!

## **Share your Success!**

Volunteers, neighbourhoods and Parks Hamilton want to know about your efforts and successes! We encourage Adopt-A-Park / Green Space groups to share their success on social media and in local and community newspapers & newsletters.

Please feel free to share any highlights, participant quotes and photos of your event by emailing them to [cleanandgreen@hamilton.ca](mailto:cleanandgreen@hamilton.ca). The Group Photograph / Video Consent, Release and Waiver form in the Adopt-A-Park online Digital Tool



Box must be signed by each photographed volunteer, or by a parent/guardian for volunteers under the age of 18.

## **Important Contact Information**

### **Adopt-A-Park / Green Space Program Information:**

Community Programs

Tel: (905) 546-2424 ext. 1482

Email: [cleanandgreen@hamilton.ca](mailto:cleanandgreen@hamilton.ca) Website: [www.hamilton.ca/adoptapark](http://www.hamilton.ca/adoptapark)

### **Adopt-A-Park Clean Up Supplies**

Register on our Team Up to Clean Up website at:

[www.hamilton.ca/teamuptocleanup](http://www.hamilton.ca/teamuptocleanup)

Email: [cleanandgreen@hamilton.ca](mailto:cleanandgreen@hamilton.ca)

### **Events of 15 or more people and beyond a clean-up:**

Contact Recreation Facilities, they will determine if a Community S.E.A.T is required [Recreation Facility Rentals | City of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada](#)

### **Graffiti reporting:**

Call 911 to report graffiti in progress.

Call (905) 546-CITY (2489) to report existing graffiti.

### **Vandalism:**

Vandalism should be reported immediately to the City of Hamilton by calling (905) 546-CITY (2489). Do not intervene.

### **Needles:**

Found a needle, now what?

If you find a needle on Public property including sidewalks, streets, boulevards, parks, trails or facilities, contact the City of Hamilton, Customer Contact Centre, (905) 546-CITY (2489) and report it.

[Needle Syringe Supplies and Disposal](#)

### **Bulk garbage and garbage pick:**

Reasonable amounts of garbage can be left in and at existing garbage



receptacles inside your park for Parks staff to collect. However, if you have more than 10 bags that can't fit inside already existing garbage receptacles or have unusually large items / bulk garbage, please contact (905) 546-CITY (2489) to arrange a scheduled pick up.

### **Reporting illegal dumping:**

- 🌿 Be aware of activities in your neighborhood. If you see someone illegally dumping or if there are areas where illegal dumping has occurred.
- 🌿 Call (905) 546-CITY (2489)
- 🌿 Provide as much information as you can, including:
  - make/model or license plate number of vehicle description of people
  - any other information you think would help in an investigation

Do not approach anyone you believe is responsible for the dumping. City staff are trained to deal with these situations and are responsible for the investigation.

### **Public Health, Food Safety Program:**

110 King Street West Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4S6 Phone: 905-546-2489

Fax: 905- 546-2787

Email: [foodsafety@hamilton.ca](mailto:foodsafety@hamilton.ca)

### **Encampments:**

We discourage cleanups near busy streets or parks with current or recent encampment areas.

Concerns regarding encampments, please contact the Coordinated Response Team at [unsheltered@hamilton.ca](mailto:unsheltered@hamilton.ca) or call 905-546-2828

[City of Hamilton Encampment Response: https://www.hamilton.ca/people-programs/housing-shelter/preventing-ending-homelessness/city-hamilton-encampment-response](https://www.hamilton.ca/people-programs/housing-shelter/preventing-ending-homelessness/city-hamilton-encampment-response)