

Organizing a Spring Clean-Up



[Where to start](#)

[Things to gather](#)

[How to get people to participate](#)

[How to pay for the clean-up day?](#)

[How to keep your community litter-free after the clean-up](#)

[Communities that have organized spring clean-ups](#)

Where to start

Several communities in Alaska hold annual spring clean-ups to control litter around the community and at the dump/landfill. Spring clean-ups can be a great way to maintain a clean and controlled dump/landfill area and get the community involved and aware about solid waste issues.



If you'd like to organize a spring clean-up in your community, a great place to start is to:

- 1) **read over this document**
- 2) **call a few communities** that have organized successful clean-up events themselves (listed at the bottom of this document).

Things to gather

Before you set the date of your clean-up you might want to make some initial calls and talk to people about gathering the following items:

Trash bags



For trash bags, give ALPAR a call! ALPAR has supplied several communities with **free** large yellow trash bags for spring clean-up events. As a general rule, the number of bags you should ask for should be equal to the number of people that live in your community. So if your community's population is 200, you should ask for 200 bags.



Source: Chenega Bay 2003 Clean-up

The bags from ALPAR are free, however, you will need to pay for shipping the bags. Typically, it costs about \$10 to ship 200 bags from Anchorage to communities in Alaska. ALPAR asks that only one organization per community orders bags for clean-up days. For example, if the City and IRA in your community are going to hold separate clean-up days, have one organization order bags for the whole community and then share the bags between the organizations. Or better yet, have the two organizations join efforts for one BIG clean-up day!

To contact ALPAR call 274-3266 www.alparalaska.com

If for any reason you can't get bags from ALPAR or if you need more trash bags, ask if your local store could donate some for your clean-up event. We think it never hurts to ask when you are trying to do something good for your community!

Gloves



Everyone who is picking up trash on the clean-up day should wear some sort of protective wear on their hands to avoid direct contact with the trash.

For picking up general wind-scattered litter such as paper, plastic, aluminum cans, etc., thin latex gloves should be just fine. These are the type of gloves that come in boxes with many pairs and are quite inexpensive. Most clinics will have boxes of latex gloves. Try going to your local clinic, your school, or even your washeteria to see if they could donate latex gloves for your clean-up day.

For picking up other kinds of trash such as **hazardous wastes** (batteries, oil containers, other chemical containers), **honeybucket bags**, **animal carcasses** etc., **thick rubber gloves and other protective gear are necessary** (such as goggles, tyvek overalls, masks, etc.). Special training such as HAZWOPER training may also be needed. The general public should NOT pick up these types of waste! This should be left to trained solid waste staff.



To read about protective gear for handling special and hazardous wastes, and to find out where to purchase protective gear, [see our webpage on safety gear.](#)

[Also, see our webpage on HAZWOPER training.](#)

Hand sanitizer

Hand sanitizer is a good thing to have for people to use after they have collected trash. Hand sanitizer is an alcohol-based lotion or gel that kills germs when you rub it on your hands. Many stores sell hand sanitizers these days. If your local store stocks it, ask if they could donate a bottle for the clean-up day.

How to get people to participate

Get the word out!

Once you decide on a date for the clean-up event, start telling people you know about it. Put up **flyers** anywhere you can in the community such as the post office, IRA office, local stores, the washeteria, etc. Make announcements on **CB systems**. You can also put notices about the event in any newspapers or **newsletters** that go out.



Involve kids

Kids of all ages are great to bring into a clean-up day. The more hands the better! Kids can be split up into groups with adult supervisors when going out to pick up litter. Getting kids involved is a great way to educate them about the importance of a clean environment.



Source: Chenega Bay 2003 Clean-up

Make it fun- have a party!

What better way to get people out to the clean-up event than to offer food and drinks! Ask your local stores for any possible **donations of food, drinks, snacks** etc. and have a **BBQ** and a party at the end of the clean-up!



Offer prizes

You could even hold a raffle contest and offer small prizes or gift certificates at the party. One community that we talked to was able to get prizes and gift certificates donated by local businesses. They passed out one raffle ticket for every bag of trash that people collected - so the more trash picked up, the better your chances of winning a prize!

Pay clean-up staff

If you have the funding to do so, you are almost guaranteed a good turnout of litter pickers if you offer to pay them. One community combined City and IRA funding pools and were able to pay people \$2.50/full trash bag of litter collected. Another community paid 20 people that signed up for the clean-up an hourly rate for 1 week of litter pick-up. Other communities mustered up the funds to pay people \$1/trash bag.

How to pay for the clean-up day?



- ☀ Many communities have been able to hold clean-up days for **free** by using community **volunteers** and getting **donations** from ALPAR and local businesses (for trash bags, gloves, snacks, etc.).
A note about donations: Be sure to ask as many businesses in your community for donations as you can. One community got a construction camp to donate money and trash bags to a spring clean-up because the construction camp is responsible for producing a lot of solid waste in the community.
- ☀ Some communities use **IGAP** or **City** funds to pay for spring clean-up events.
- ☀ **ALPAR** offers **grants** from \$350 and up to fund Youth Litter Patrols in communities. Communities must show that they are involved with other litter prevention and clean-up activities to receive the grant. Applications are due March 1st. Contact ALPAR at 274-3266 for more information about this grant.
- ☀ You may also be able to apply for some other small money grants. [See our webpage on grants.](#)

How to keep your community litter-free

Now that your community is clean and litter-free after picking up all that trash, how can you KEEP it litter-free?

Develop litter laws or ordinances

The **Native Village and City of White Mountain** passed a litter law which established a \$300 fine if caught littering in public. White Mountain also passed a dog ordinance which states that no dogs under 3 months are allowed to run loose in the community (puppies love to scatter trash!).

If you would like to contact White Mountain to ask about how they developed their litter laws, call Nora Brown at 638 3411.



The **Louden Tribal Council** passed a resolution prohibiting their three local stores from using plastic shopping bags (those pesky white bags end up everywhere!). To promote community acceptance of the ban, Louden used a 1999 EPA grant to purchase \$2,000 worth of canvas shopping bags for people to use instead of the plastic ones. To read more about how they developed their ban, click on this link:

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/tribal/thirds/galena.htm>

If you would like to contact Louden to ask about how they developed their plastic bag ban call Cindy Pilot, Director, Louden Tribal Council Environmental Department, at 907 656-1711.



Cover trash

Dogs aren't the only animals that can scatter trash. Birds and Mother Nature's own WIND can pick up and carry trash long distances. At home, storing your trash in some sort of container will help prevent unwanted scavengers. At the dump or landfill, covering waste with dirt, a plastic cover, old carpet or clothes, or anything else you may have, can reduce litter scatter.

Use fencing to prevent litter scatter

Fencing secured into the ground or even **movable temporary fencing** provides windbreaks and helps prevent litter scatter.



Temporary/moveable fencing

Put up signs



Creating "Please Don't Litter" signs or simple flyers and posting them at your local store, post office, washeteria, etc. can also help remind people not to litter.

You can also get the word out about littering in your local newsletters. Igiugig put out this great flyer in their local newsletter titled "No more litterbugs!" [See our spring](#)

[cleanup webpage for this flyer.](#)

Talk to schools

One of the best ways to get the word out about littering, is to go into the classrooms and educate school kids. Let them know how important it is for the environment not to litter and get them involved in the clean-up days.



Other communities that have organized spring clean-ups

Below are a few people we talked to that have recently organized spring clean-up events in their communities. Feel free to give them a call! They were all very friendly and can share their stories about how to organize a spring clean-up.

White Mountain

Nora Brown 638 3411

Port Graham

Wes Breedlove 284 2227

Chenega Bay

Kate McLaughin 573 5476

Gambell

Gerald 985 5346

Buckland

Darlene 494 2121

Igiugig - [See our spring clean-up webpage for pictures of Igiugig's great clean-up day](#) Daniel

Salmon 533-3211

Also, [go to our website](#) to use our database to get contact information for many other communities that have organized spring clean-ups!

