



TRASH-FREE MYSTIC Self-guided event guidelines

MyRWA's top priority is to ensure the safety of volunteers and staff. If you are coordinating a cleanup for the Trash-Free Mystic Fall Cleanup Challenge, we ask that you please follow these guidelines.

Supplies*

*If finding supplies are a financial burden or otherwise, please reach out and we can assist.

Each participant should bring their own trash bags, disposable gloves, sun protection (hat, glasses, sunscreen), water and snacks (optional). We also recommend bringing separate (paper) bags for recyclable goods.

Disposal

Develop a plan to properly dispose of collected trash well in advance of the cleanup. Discuss disposal options with property manager or MyRWA. **DO NOT** dispose of trash bags in full or overflowing trash cans. It may be necessary to bring collected trash home for disposal with your household waste. MyRWA can assist with contacting DCR on state park properties.

Please do not pick up trash on private property without the permission of the property owner.

Data Collection

Group coordinators should complete the online data collection form at the end of their event (MyRWA will send this form to participants). Please make note of the locations where you picked up trash – this helps us identify which areas have the most trash around the watershed. Please also keep in mind which trash items you see the most often.

Share your work!

We would love to share your awesome efforts on our MyRWA social media accounts! If you post your cleanup on social media, please tag #TrashFreeMystic, #FallCleanupChallenge, and @mystic.river.watershed so we can see and share your posts! OR if you'd like to share photos directly with us, please email them to us (daria.clark@mysticriver.org).

COVID-19 Guidelines

Volunteers should **NOT** participate if:

- You have symptoms of COVID-19 or acute illness; including fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell



- You have tested positive for COVID-19 or been presumed to have COVID-19 and continue to experience symptoms of COVID-19 including fever
- You are currently under quarantine for any reason

General Safety

1. All children must be supervised by an parent or guardian.
2. In addition to gloves, wear closed-toe shoes at all times and wear adequate clothing and sun-block to prevent sunburn.
3. Avoid over-exertion and dehydration. Stop early at the first sign of fatigue.
4. Do not lift anything too heavy—when in doubt, do not try.
5. Do not touch or pick up animals—alive or dead.
6. Beware of broken glass, rusty items, and other sharp materials. Treat as a hazardous item (see below).
7. **DO NOT touch any hazardous items.** (See below.)

Hazardous Items

DO NOT touch any hazardous items. Do not touch or pick up animals—alive or dead. Beware of broken glass, rusty items, and other sharp materials. Treat as a hazardous item (see below). Syringes/needles, “bottle bombs” (capped plastic bottles with brown liquid & tin foil), glass, rusty metal, etc. Volunteers should never pickup these items and should notify the local cleanup coordinator if they find one of these items. **The cleanup coordinator should mark the area and contact appropriate trained personnel/site manager.** If you are having difficulty identifying the site manager, contact the city or town clerk who should be able to direct you appropriately.

Only collect human-created items (plastics, metal, glass, food packaging, cigarette butts, etc.). Please do not pick up any intact commercial fishing gear (see below). Sewage treatment disks can be picked up, but use gloves. Natural debris (seaweed, kelp, driftwood, etc.) is part of the natural system and should be left in place. Avoid disturbing plants and animals. **Do not touch any of the hazardous items discussed above (syringes/needles, metal drums, potentially live fireworks, and potential “bottle bombs”).**

Fishing Gear

If you find intact fishing gear (such as lobster pots or buoys), or fragments of fishing gear that contain identification numbers, do not remove the gear. Instead, note any identification numbers and report them to the Massachusetts Environmental Police Dispatcher (“MEP”) at (617) 626-1650. If you find fishing gear debris with no identification number that is clearly damaged beyond use as fishing gear, such debris may be removed and disposed of or recycled.

Thank you!

Thank you all for the work and time you dedicate to the Mystic! Every piece of litter picked up off the ground is one that isn't going to end up in our rivers and lakes! Questions? Contact daria.clark@mysticriver.org.