

General Guidance for Volunteering for Border Trash Cleanups in Arizona

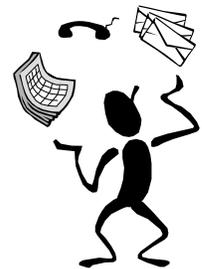
Thank you for your interest in volunteering for a border trash cleanup. Volunteering is a worthy undertaking, with positive results for both the volunteer and the goal of the intended effort. Cleanups of trash from illegal immigration take place frequently to keep up with the continuous depositing of waste in Arizona's borderlands. Volunteers are often needed to help with the cleanups. Border trash cleanups are often in more remote, rugged desert terrain and therefore have special risks. It is important to know what to expect and how to handle certain situations before participating in the cleanup.

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) is pleased to provide this fact sheet with guidance on how to volunteer and what to know when participating in border trash cleanups in Arizona. Additional resources can be found on the Arizona Border Trash (AZBT) Web site at www.azbordertrash.gov. Questions can be addressed to AZBorderTrash@azdeq.gov.

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

All volunteers should coordinate with a governmental entity leading a cleanup event. Some ways you can offer to volunteer for border trash cleanups are:

- ✓ Check the [AZBT Web site calendar](#) for upcoming cleanups. Contact the cleanup organizer to see if they need volunteers, and get event details and parking information. The cleanup organizer may ask you to fill out forms such as a release from liability form and an emergency contact form. Follow the cleanup organizer's instructions on what is requested.
- ✓ Look at the [Partners link](#) on the AZBT Web site to find contact information for landowners, and ask them if they have any cleanups planned in which you could participate.
- ✓ Sign up to volunteer for future cleanups by accessing the [Sign Up to Volunteer Form](#) on the AZBT Web site and fill in the requested information. Your information will be added to a database that can be shared with stakeholders who conduct border trash cleanups for when they need volunteers.



SUPPLIES TO BRING

- ✓ Bring plenty of water, a snack, a charged cell phone or other means of communication, and any medications needed.
- ✓ Consider carrying supplies in a backpack or fanny pack to keep hands free during the cleanup.
- ✓ Bring other items such as eye protection, trash grabbers, or trash bags if requested by cleanup organizer. They may provide these items for you.

HOW TO DRESS



Below are suggestions for clothing and other gear to protect against the elements and rough terrain often encountered in the areas where cleanups of border trash take place.

- ✓ Lightweight hat with wide brim – Protects against the intense sun and prevents burns.
- ✓ Eye protection – Protects against the bright sun, and from branches and debris. This can be sunglasses, safety glasses or goggles.
- ✓ Sunscreen, lip balm – Choose a high sun protection factor (SPF). The [American Academy of Dermatology](#) recommends a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or greater, and one that covers both UVA and UVB rays, and is water resistant. Bring with you to reapply every two hours, or more often if sweating heavily. Wear in both cloudy and sunny weather.
- ✓ Lightweight, loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirt – Protects from the elements, branches, debris and insects. Do not wear tank tops.
- ✓ Long pants, tucked into boots – Protects against the elements and prickly plants. Do not wear shorts.
- ✓ Sturdy boots or thick-soled shoes – Protects against cactus spines and sharp objects.

- ✓ Windbreaker/raincoat for sudden changes in weather that can occur. Layer clothing for dramatic changes in weather that can occur.
- ✓ Insect repellent. Also refrain from using perfumes or scented products as they can attract insects. A small swipe of acetone-based nail polish remover applied to the hands may help keep bees from becoming agitated, as has been reported by personnel that regularly conduct field work. Wear light-colored clothing. Bright colors can attract insects.
- ✓ Change clothes after the cleanup and wash them separately in hot water.

Cleanup organizers should provide volunteers with latex gloves (or non-latex, such as nitrile, for those with allergies) and leather gloves, dust masks and grabbers. If they do not provide these items, evaluate whether you feel comfortable participating in the cleanup or not.

SAFETY OVERVIEW

- ✓ The cleanup organizer should provide a safety briefing prior to conducting any cleanup activities. Volunteers should wear latex/nitrile gloves and leather gloves, plus a dust mask, usually provided by the cleanup organizer. Border trash can pose unique risks. It can provide a haven for insects or animals that spread diseases, such as West Nile virus or Hantavirus. Dust can be stirred up when moving trash. All volunteers should use a trash grabber. Do not use hands to grab the trash.
- ✓ A variety of potentially dangerous items can be encountered on cleanups of border trash. This includes personal hygiene products (often soiled), personal toiletry products, medications, medical sharps (such as needles) or other sharp objects, and weapons. There is also the potential to find deceased individuals, drug smugglers, human smugglers, drugs or illegal immigrants. Animals can be attracted to trash, so contact with animal waste or remains is also possible. Ask the cleanup organizer for guidance on handling encounters with different situations, or refer to the [General Guidance Manual for Conducting Border Trash Cleanups in Arizona](#) on the AZBT Web site.
- ✓ Stay in groups and be aware of your surroundings. Avoid contact with anyone who does not appear to be part of the cleanup group, get away and immediately report to your cleanup organizer who should report it to law enforcement. You do not know their situation, and it is best to avoid contact.
- ✓ Notify the cleanup organizer of anything that you feel is suspicious or unusual. Let a camera get close to an item of concern instead of you. Use the zoom lens to photograph an item of concern instead of getting close and report it to the cleanup organizer. Remember to not do anything that you feel uncomfortable doing.
- ✓ Avoid walking in washes. Flash floods can hit fast, even if it is not raining in your area.
- ✓ Radios and cell phones used in border areas may pick up interference from Mexico. Be prepared to move to another area to better access the U.S. networks.
- ✓ Lock your vehicle; do not leave any water, food or valuables in the vehicle. Vehicles can be broken into or stolen by people wanting these resources or to leave the area.
- ✓ Be careful bending; watch for low-lying branches so you don't bump your head; watch your step. Cactus can be hard to spot, and the ground can become uneven.
- ✓ Filled trash bags can be very heavy. Do not pick them up, and use equipment instead to move trash bags or heavy objects. Do not overfill the bags. Leave enough room to use zip ties or duct tape to seal the trash bags to prevent spilling or leakage. You will be instructed on where to leave the filled trash bags.
- ✓ Do not reuse the mask and gloves once the cleanup is complete; throw them away with the trash at the end of the cleanup. Remove gloves and clean hands before eating or drinking.
- ✓ Check with the group organizer before you leave.
- ✓ The Arizona Department of Transportation provides a safety briefing and video regarding highway cleanup efforts at this link, www.azdot.gov/Highways/AdoptAHwy/Index.asp, under the Volunteer tab.



Taking precautions and trusting your instincts can lead to a safe and enjoyable volunteer experience. Enjoy your time, and know that you are helping to clean up the environment.