

## **Adopt-A-Highway Group Leader Guidelines**

Thank you for wanting to be a part of Adopt-A-Highway. Hundreds of caring citizens like you and your group have made South Carolina a better place to live, work and play.

### **Getting Started**

Choose the section of primary or secondary highway your group would like to adopt. (Please note that interstate highways or freeways are not included in the program due to federal safety regulations). The section of highway you choose should be along rural roads with relatively little traffic. Safety is our first concern. The section should be two miles long. As a rule, groups are asked to select a 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice, just in case the section you have selected is not adoptable. Your Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator and Resident Maintenance Engineer can help you determine if the section you've chosen qualifies for this program.

### **Agreement Forms**

In order to qualify as an official Adopt-A-Highway group, your organization must complete the Adopt-A-Highway Agreement Form. Until the form is on file, the SCDOT cannot issue any trash bags or safety vests or construct the recognition sign for your group.

Your county coordinator will be able to assist you if you have any questions. Completing and submitting the form through your county coordinator begins a two-year commitment from your group. At the end of that time, we hope that you will renew your agreement. You will need to complete and submit a renewal form.

### **Bags and Safety Vests**

SCDOT will provide trash bags and OSHA certified safety vests for your volunteers. You will be asked to sign for these for inventory purposes and may keep them throughout the duration of your agreement.

- Prior to your cleanup, you must pick up your supplies from either your County Coordinator at an agreed-upon time or from the SCDOT during normal workday hours. If you are picking up from the SCDOT office, don't wait until Saturday morning when the SCDOT Offices will be closed.
- Be sure you have a supply of report cards on hand. These should be completed after the cleanup and given to the coordinator within one week of the cleanup. The report forms are important to the success of the program.

### **Preparing for the Cleanup**

The success of Adopt-A-Highway depends on good organization and coordination. Whether you handle all these tasks or delegate them, there are several things that should be done to make for a successful Saturday cleanup.

- Make sure everyone knows you'll be working as a group and during scheduled cleanup times.
- Arrange ahead of time for carpooling to limit the number of vehicles parked along the highway.

- Make sure your group knows that in case of bad weather the cleanup will be postponed. Litter collection should never be done in the dark or in bad weather.
- Notify local news media who may have an interest in publicizing your group's activities.
- Remind your group of the appropriate clothing. Long pants and long-sleeved shirts and sturdy shoes help avoid scratches and irritation from poisonous plants. Light or brightly colored clothing will make them easily visible to passing traffic.
- Be sure you have all the materials and supplies you'll need beforehand, including first aid kits.
- Check with members of your group to be aware of any allergies that might be important (such as bee-stings, etc).
- Work out a plan for what you will do in the event of an emergency. Find out what the quickest route to the hospital is.
- Park vehicles at both ends of the adopted section.

### **The Cleanup**

The day of the cleanup can be a rewarding and enjoyable activity for your group if it's coordinated well.

- Review the safety rules with your group and let them know you take these rules seriously.
- Before beginning a pickup, you will unfasten the "Litter Pick-Up" sign and lower it into place. When open, it will display the words "Litter Pickup Ahead". At the end of the cleanup, close the sign to indicate completion of work.
- If the weather is warm, be sure you bring plenty of drinking water and schedule frequent breaks.

### **Safety**

Your most important responsibility as group leader is to insure safety for all your organization's cleanup activities. This responsibility includes the following:

- You must attend all safety meetings scheduled by the SCDOT Resident Maintenance Engineer or the county coordinator.
- You must have a safety meeting before each cleanup to refresh your group members on the safety rules.
- Volunteers must be at least 13 years old to participate in Adopt-A-Highway cleanups. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult on all Adopt-A-Highway cleanups.

\*\*Your group must agree to abide by SCDOT safety rules in order to be a part of the program.

### **Safety Guidelines**

As much as we value our state's beauty, we value our citizens even more. Volunteer groups must follow very strict safety guidelines. Please review the following safety procedures before each cleanup.

1. Before beginning a pickup, the group leader will unfasten the caution sign and lower it into place. When open, it will display the words "Litter Pickup Ahead". At the end of the cleanup, close the sign to indicate completion of work.
2. Everyone participating in the cleanup must wear an orange safety vest at all times. Long sleeves, long pants, sturdy shoes or boots, work gloves and eye protection are recommended. SCDOT supplies only the vests.
3. Alcoholic beverages and intoxicated participants are prohibited on a cleanup.
4. Don't try to handle hazardous litter such as: discarded syringes/needles, car batteries, and drink bottles with liquid in them, etc. Inform the Resident Maintenance Engineer or law enforcement to let them handle these kinds of problems.
5. Work together as a group and walk facing oncoming traffic. Work one side of the highway at a time.
6. Every group should have a first aid kit and cell phone.
7. In warm weather, take frequent drinks of water, frequent breaks and take steps to prevent sunburn.
8. Be very careful handling broken glass. Be careful not to step or kneel in areas where there might be hidden broken glass.
9. Be alert and ready to react to traffic.
10. Do not pick up trash from the pavement. Stay at least five feet away from the edge of the road.
11. Do not engage in horseplay.
12. Demonstrations are not allowed.
13. Watch out for bees, wasps, fire ants, snakes, poisonous plants and other potential natural hazards (especially if some individuals have allergies). Always look before stepping.
14. If youth groups are involved in the cleanup, adult supervision is required at all times. Do not bring small children to a cleanup.
15. Stay off of steep slopes and don't try and remove trash from grass and shrubs that are overgrown.
16. Don't wear music headsets, which could interfere with hearing traffic. Don't wear hats that could obscure your vision and keep you from seeing an approaching hazard.
17. Don't try to compress trash into the bags, as sharp objects could cause injury.
18. Don't bring knives, machetes or other such tools that could cause accidental injuries.
19. Work will only be performed during daylight hours and not during inclement weather.
20. Volunteers that are under the care of a physician (i.e. has had surgery, etc.) and have been prescribed medication (pain, etc.) that alters normal reactions, should stay home until they are better equipped to handle roadside pickup.

### **After the Cleanup**

- Collected litter should remain on the site in view of the road, and SCDOT personnel will pick up the collected litter during the following week.
- Collect and store the safety vests and unused bags.
- Fill in the report card and give it to the county coordinator within one week of the cleanup.
- Enjoy the good feelings that come from having been a part of something beautiful.