



Organising a club clean-up

Club clean-ups or litter-picks are great fun and really satisfying, we've gathered a few ideas and tips to make it easier for you:

- An Taisce organises an event called National Spring Clean which takes place in April each year; clubs can register their clean-ups with National Spring Clean - www.nationalspringclean.org. If you register with National Spring Clean they will send you a Clean-up Kit including bags and gloves. There's a similar scheme in Northern Ireland BIG Spring Clean, see <https://www.livehereandlovehere.org/cgi-bin/generic?instanceID=19>
- Spring or early winter are good times to do litter-picks as vegetation is not so high, so it's easier to see and remove rubbish.
- Make sure to choose an area that is littered enough to be satisfying, but not so bad that it'll be disheartening. If possible, check with the landowner about doing the clean-up (it's highly unlikely anybody will have a problem with what you're doing, hopefully they will appreciate your efforts).
- It's a good idea to time-limit the clean-up, an hour or two before you go on a walk works well.
- Brief people at the beginning about wearing gloves, and not picking up anything they're not happy to pick-up. Have a first aid kit available just in case. Hand sanitiser can be useful too.
- If you're doing a car-park, clean a stretch of road either side of the car-park, that way people driving the road will see what you're doing. If collecting on the road-side it's a good idea to wear fluorescent bibs for visibility and safety.
- The Environmental Awareness Officer in the local County Council may also be able to assist by providing bags, gloves and litter pickers (a handy device for picking up litter - not a person!).
- The Council may also be prepared to collect the litter at a pre-arranged point (they won't pick up at weekends, but will generally do so the following Monday, at the very least we hope they would accept bagged litter from a club without asking you to pay any disposal charge).
- Rather than leaving the bagged litter at the beauty spot you may need to store it at a member's house. Having a trailer or pick-up that you can put bags into is useful, as litter is often wet and the bags can leak which can be very messy in an ordinary car.
- Use different plastic bags to separate clean plastic bottles and aluminium cans etc for recycling (approximately 35% of waste collected during National Spring Clean is recycled).
- At the end, take some photos of the group with the litter gathered for your club website, Facebook etc. Send them to Mountaineering Ireland (helen@mountaineering.ie) and local media too, this generates positive publicity for your club and shows that walkers and climbers care about the environment. If you're cleaning up a litter blackspot, take some photos beforehand.
- Mountaineering Ireland insurance covers clean-ups as a club event.