



## **Litter Picking Health & Safety Guidance**

Slough Borough Council covers the litter picks of the Slough Anti-Litter Society limited liability insurance when accompanied or facilitated by an SBC employee and carried out on SBC-owned land/property. The SBC employee carries out a risk assessment beforehand and carries a first aid kit on the day.

For litter picks where the SBC is not involved, Zurich Insurance covers the litter picks of the Slough Anti-Litter Society. Please refer to the current proof of liabilities cover letter for all information. The responsible Lead Litter Picker carries a first aid kit on the day.

### **Protective Clothing and Equipment**

Anyone taking part in a litter pick should use the following items at all times:

- Gloves to minimise contact with any noxious or dangerous materials.
- Reflective hi-visibility waistcoats to highlight the litter-picker to traffic and pedestrians.
- Wear stout shoes and weather-appropriate clothing.

### **Potential Hazards Noxious and Dangerous Materials**

The following materials may be encountered during litter picks and you should treat them with caution:

- Broken glass. Remove using a litter picker or a brush and shovel, avoid contact by hand, and dispose of it in a sturdy container.
- Drug-related litter and hypodermic needles. These should not be moved under any circumstances. You should note the location and report it to the Council employee who is present. The Council will arrange specialist removal.
- Suspect materials and fly-tipping. You should not remove potentially dangerous items, such as unknown liquids in containers, building materials, asbestos or fly-tipping. Note the location and report the matter to the Council employee who is present, who will arrange for specialist removal. If you are in any doubt about an item, leave it and report it.

## **General Site Safety and Inspection**

You have a duty towards yourself, the Council and the public to work safely, so be mindful of the following:

- Litter picking by the side of roads must be carried out with extreme caution, due to the risk of being hit by vehicles. Only litter pick where there are wide verges or pavements, and face oncoming traffic when doing this. You must be visible to road users, and therefore you must only carry out this activity if you have and can wear a hi-visibility waistcoat, and only do this in clear daylight.
- Do not attempt to remove litter from roads.
- Avoid reaching into hedges or undergrowth in such a way as to expose your face, eyes and skin to scratches from thorns or branches. Leave it if you cannot reach an item with your litter picker.
- Avoid working close to rivers or on steep slopes, where there is an increased risk of falls and slips. When working close to ditches, avoid reaching into the ditch to remove litter unless it can be safely reached with a litter picker.
- Be aware of wildlife. Avoid disturbing animals and birds that may be nesting in the spring, and avoid wasp and bee nests in the summer. Be considerate. Do not disturb animals or damage plants. Don't remove "natural" rubbish like logs, stones and weeds – they can be "home" to animals. Don't try to release entangled animals; call the RSPCA if you come across any. Do not attempt to remove dead or live animals.
- Do not enter an area or attempt to litter pick an area where works are restricted, workmen are already in place, or the public does not have a right of entry. Lifting and Handling Materials Be aware of the risk of injury caused by carrying bags of collected litter and attempting to lift and carry heavy materials.

**To avoid injury to yourself, you must apply the principles of manual handling as follows:**

- Use litter pickers to prevent constant bending and stretching.
- Make sure an item is safe to handle with no sharp edges or noxious contents.
- Decide if one or two people can safely remove an item.
- Rubbish should not be compressed using hands or feet as this can accidentally puncture the skin.
- Avoid contact with the body when carrying plastic bin bags.
- Ensure any cuts or abrasions are clean and covered with a waterproof plaster.
- Do not overfill bin bags and avoid lifting heavy objects or sacks alone.
- Only try to remove an item if this can be done without straining.
- Bend your legs and keep your back straight when lifting an item.

**Other hazards to consider are:**

- Trips and falls if working on uneven ground or where the ground level drops.
- The time of day you carry out the activity e.g. the middle of the day in the summer, maybe too hot with a risk of sunburn. Daylight is better than dusk.
- Dog foul and other unclean articles or materials.

**If there are children involved:**

- Arrange adequate supervision for children - at least one adult per 6 children.
- Ensure parents know what clothing and footwear the children need.
- Ensure that you know any relevant medical conditions affecting the children.
- Try to limit the amount of time litter picking to 1-2 hours.
- Plan breaks.

**On the day:**

- Be aware of your environment and do not put yourself at risk whilst picking litter.
- Clean hands thoroughly and for 20 seconds after handling equipment and before eating or drinking.
- Do not confront people who are littering.