



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Generic Hazard Identification and Risk Control - Litter Removal

1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides an assessment of the generic hazards associated with litter removal along with measures to control the risk of each hazard occurring.

All Clean-up leaders must follow all the risk control measures for the generic hazards identified and in addition assess any hazards that are specific to their clean-up location and put the appropriate risk control measures in place.

This assessment will be reviewed annually.

Any feedback on this document should be addressed to the Beach Patrol Australia committee via admin@beachpatrol.com.au

This document only applies to litter removal in Victoria.

Date of this assessment	19 October 2025 2025
Date of next assessment	19 October 2025 2026

2. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date	Details of change	Author
1.0	24/02/2015	Initial version	Terry Lobert
2.0	24/02/2016	1. Section 1 – Note that this document only applies to beach and foreshore litter removal in Victoria 2. Section 3 – Added hazard #11 relating to venomous snakes	Terry Lobert
	24/02/2017	No change	
3.0	24/02/2018	Section 3 - Added hazard #12 relating to Blue-ringed octopus	Terry Lobert
4.0	18/03/2020	Integration of BP and LOS documents Addition of Air and Water Quality risks.	Terry Lobert
Annual review delayed due to suspension of group cleans during Covid 19 lockdowns and slow return to normal group activities			
5.0	12/03/2023	Email address for feedback added above, advice on heavy items amended Section 3, safety advice to volunteers	Jill Sokol, Simon Gaites Ross Headifen, Feb committee
6.0	12/9/2024	Minor amendments including updated weblinks.	Simon Gaites
7.0	19/10/2025	Additions: hazardous materials/objects; use of vehicles/trailers for transport of heavy items	Jill Sokol



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3. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK CONTROL

#	Identified Hazards	Risk control measures	Who is responsible
Litter Removal (3 risks)			
1.	Needle stick injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sharps container must be brought to every clean-up for the safe collection of any syringes found. Before the clean-up starts, ensure that all volunteers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are advised to wear tough gloves to protect hands from accidental contact with the needle of an intact syringe. Are aware that they must not place a syringe in a litter collection bag. Are clear on the process for handling a found syringe, whether is intact or not, either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bring to the leader's attention to remove and where it is located Bring it themselves to the sharps container (Do not touch) scooped into a bottle or held in a litter picker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of the risk control measures. All volunteers to follow the risk control measures once briefed by the Leader(s).
2.	Injury from sharp objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before the clean-up starts, ensure that all volunteers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are aware that if they find a sharp object, such as broken glass, they must dispose of it carefully in the nearest public litter bin. Are aware that they must not place sharp objects in a litter collection bag. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of the risk control measures. All volunteers to follow the risk control measures once briefed by the Leader(s).
3.	Injury from heavy collection bag, heavy items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before the clean-up starts, ensure that all volunteers are warned not to fill their litter collection bag to the point where it becomes too heavy for them to lift safely without injuring themselves. Getting volunteers to take two bags may mitigate this risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure. All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leader(s).



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#	Identified Hazards	Risk control measures	Who is responsible
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers must not lift heavy items. These should be reported to leader, who can report to relevant authority via the Snap Send Solve app. 	
4.	Hazardous materials and items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers must not collect items that are potentially hazardous, such as pressurised canisters or building waste/rubble. Such items should be reported to the relevant authority directly of using the Snap Send Solve app. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of the risk control measures. Volunteers report the materials to leader Leader to ensure waste is reported.
<p>Photo credits</p> <p>Science Photo Library</p> <p>City of Dandenong</p> <p>LOS 3150</p> <p>Asbestos product guide</p> <p>ABC News</p>	 		 



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5.	Vehicle/trailer use for transporting heavy equipment and/or rubbish collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overloading Keep within manufacturer's load rating and axle/towball limits. • Safe towing Only allow licensed drivers with towing experience. • Secure load Use tie-downs, nets, or cages; include this in loading procedures. <p>Injury during loading/unloading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use team lifts for heavy items; gloves & enclosed shoes; avoid awkward postures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance Prior to use, check tyres, lights, brakes etc. For BPA vehicles: Keep a maintenance log. Report any issues to BPA. • Storage/parking Park on flat ground, lock when unattended, use wheel chocks if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) • All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leaders(s).

#	Identified Hazards	Risk control measures	Who is responsible
Environmental (4 risks)			



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#	Identified Hazards	Risk control measures	Who is responsible
6.	Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is no easy access to fresh water in the vicinity of the clean-up area, then ensure that all volunteers are advised beforehand that they should bring water during the clean-up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers are made aware of this risk control measure before attending All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leaders(s).
7.	UV exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all volunteers are advised beforehand that they should come prepared to protect themselves from UV exposure and follow the Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek, Slide advice of the Cancer Council of Australia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers are made aware of this risk control measure before attending and provide sunscreen. All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leaders(s).
8.	Weather exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the forecast temperature for the time of the clean is predicted to be greater than 30°C then consider cancelling the clean. Ensure that all volunteers are advised beforehand that they should come prepared to protect themselves against the forecast weather conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure. All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leaders(s).
9.	Hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers should wear suitable clothing and rainproof clothing to keep warm during cold weather, cold windy days. If the event is “rained out”, volunteers will be called off the beach or back from wherever they are cleaning to a sheltered place to keep dry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers are made aware of this risk control measure before attending All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once called back in.
10.	Lightning strike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a thunderstorm is forecast, then consider cancelling the clean-up. If there is a thunderstorm then the clean-up must be stopped and get all the volunteers to leave the area immediately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present follow the risk control measure.



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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leaders(s).
11.	Tides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In surf locations, activities will occur on low tides to avoid any mishaps with large surf. • Activity will not take place if there is a perceived risk of dangerous surf conditions. • Volunteers will be briefed to keep away from the water and not turn their backs on the ocean. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure. • All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leaders(s).
12.	Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the forecast air quality as rated by the EPA AirWatch is either VERY POOR or HAZARDOUS, then a clean-up must be cancelled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) to ensure that this risk control measure is followed.
13.	Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your clean-up is at the beach or river then check the EPA water quality beforehand, especially after heavy rainfall. If the water quality is rated as POOR, then brief volunteers beforehand to avoid contact with their skin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure, and provide hand sanitiser. • All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leaders(s).
Local Features (5 risks)			
14.	Cycle Paths and Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are cycle paths or roads crossing or alongside the area to be cleaned up, then ensure that all volunteers are made aware of their location and to take care crossing and working alongside them. • Advise volunteers not to step onto roadways to collect litter, but to work from the kerb or use grabbers if safe to do so. • All street cleans to avoid zones where the speed limit exceeds 60 kph. • Minors, even in groups with adult supervision, should not work along kerbs or close to roadways. They should only work on footpaths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure. • All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leader(s).



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all volunteers are advised to take care crossing and working alongside cycle paths, driveways, laneways and roads. Advise all volunteers to work in pairs with one as an observer whilst the other collects litter. Ensure children under 15 years old are accompanied by adults. 	
15.	Rocky areas/Groynes/Low Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there are any rocky areas or groynes included in the area to be cleaned, volunteers to be advised that sturdy footwear should be worn to clean up those areas and for those volunteers to exercise care when moving around on those areas. Advise less able participants to avoid areas with tricky footing. Volunteers wishing to clean under low structures, such as piers or jetties, should take extreme care and wear suitable head covering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure. All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leader(s).
16.	Signed hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all volunteers are advised to follow the directions given by any hazard signs in the area to be cleaned-up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure. All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leader(s).
17.	Stream or waterside banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise volunteers that they are not to operate on steep or slippery banks. All volunteers to maintain a safe distance from water's edge and to work in pairs at least. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure. All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leader(s).
18.	Cultural Heritage - Impact on Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise volunteers to keep to designated tracks in areas of identified cultural heritage. Do not walk over middens. Do not remove artefacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader(s) to ensure all volunteers are made aware of any heritage locations All volunteers to follow cultural heritage advice



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Animals (4 risks)			
19.	Dogs	To prevent volunteers from being attacked by a dog, advise all volunteers to avoid contact with dogs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure. • All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leader(s).
20.	Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise volunteers to not handle living things - especially jellyfish and octopus • Report sick or injured wildlife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk control measure. • All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leader(s).
21.	Blue-ringed octopus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Blue-ringed octopus is recognized as one of the world's most venomous marine animals. Despite their small size (12 to 20 cm) and relatively docile nature, they are dangerous to humans if provoked and handled because of their venom which contains the powerful neurotoxin - Tetrodotoxin. Blue-ringed octopuses spend much of their time hiding in crevices, so volunteers must take care when removing litter from underwater crevices and picking containers in the water, either of which could contain a Blue-ringed octopus. • Tetrodotoxin causes severe and often total body paralysis and can result in victims being fully aware of their surroundings but unable to breathe. Because of the paralysis that occurs, they have no way of signalling for help or any way of indicating distress, the victim remains conscious and alert. This effect, however, is temporary and will fade over a period of hours. The symptoms vary in severity, with children being the most at risk because of their small body size. Details here. • If someone is bitten call '000' immediately. See next page for First Aid details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk. • All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leader(s).



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22.	Venomous Snakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During warmer months (Spring to Autumn) there is an increased risk of snakes being present, particularly in bushy or grassy areas, so please ensure that all volunteers are made aware of this and advised to take care if they enter any such areas. • If someone is bitten call '000' immediately. First aid is the same for all Australian venomous snakes - using the pressure immobilization method – see next page for details. • Here are two venomous snakes that you may encounter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiger (details here) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Grey banded form</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Light banded form</p> </div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copperhead (details here) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Dark form</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Tan form</p> </div> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) to ensure that all volunteers present are made aware of this risk. • All volunteers to follow the risk control measure once briefed by the Leader(s).



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Snake bite



St John

+ first aid

In a medical emergency, call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance.

Warning

- DO NOT wash venom off the skin.
- DO NOT cut the bitten area.
- DO NOT try to suck venom out of wound.
- DO NOT use a tourniquet.
- DO NOT try to catch the snake.

- Signs** are not always visible but may be a puncture marks, bleeding or scratches.
- Symptoms** developing within an hour may include headache, impaired vision, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, breathing difficulties, drowsiness, faintness, problems speaking or swallowing.

What to do

1. Follow DRSABCD.
2. Reassure the patient and ask them not to move.
3. Apply a broad crepe bandage over the bite site as soon as possible.
4. Apply a pressure bandage (heavy crepe or elasticised roller bandage) starting just above the fingers or toes of the bitten limb, and move upwards on the limb as far as can be reached (include the snake bite). Apply firmly without stopping blood supply to the limb.
5. Immobilise the bandaged limb with splints.
6. Ensure the patient does not move.
7. Write down the time of the bite and when the bandage was applied. Stay with the patient.
8. Regularly check circulation in fingers or toes.
9. Manage for shock.
10. Ensure an ambulance has been called.



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BLUE RINGED OCTOPUS BITE

First aid treatment is pressure on the wound and artificial respiration once the paralysis has disabled the victim's respiratory muscles, which often occurs within minutes of being bitten.

Because the venom primarily kills through paralysis, victims are frequently saved if artificial respiration is started and maintained before marked cyanosis and hypotension develop. Efforts should be continued even if the victim appears not to be responding. It is essential that artificial respiration be continued without pause until medical assistance arrives. This is a daunting physical prospect for a single individual, so ideally the responsibility will need to be shared by more than one person until help can arrive.

Victims who survive the first twenty-four hours usually recover completely.