

# Adopt-A-Highway Group Leader Guidelines

Thank you for wanting to be a part of something beautiful. Hundreds of caring citizens like yourself and your group have made South Carolina a better place to live. These guidelines should help your organization's experience in adopting a highway be a rewarding one.

## ***Getting Started***

Choose the section of primary or secondary highway your group would like to adopt. (Don't consider interstate highways or freeways, as these are not included in the program for safety reasons). 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice, just in case the section you have selected is not adoptable. Your Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator and Resident Maintenance Engineer you 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 should complete the Adopt-A-Highway Agreement Form. The form is very simple, but until it is on file, the SCDOT cannot issue any supplies or materials or construct the sign for your group.

Your county coordinator for the program should 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, you will need to complete and submit a new agreement form, even if you are simply renewing for the same stretch of highway.

## ***Safety First, Last, and Always***

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's members on the safety rules.
- You should be your group's "nagger," always making sure everyone is following the safety rules.

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

## ***Supplies and Equipment***

SCDOT will provide equipment and supplies as necessary for the cleanup operations. You will be asked to sign for these for inventory purposes and may keep them throughout the duration of your agreement.

- Before a cleanup Saturday, you should come to SCDOT *during normal workday hours* to pick up any supplies (such as garbage bags) or equipment (such as gloves or safety vests) you might need. Don't wait until Saturday morning when the facilities will be closed.
- Be sure you have a supply of report cards on hand. These should be completed after the cleanup and passed to the coordinator within one week of the cleanup. They are simple forms that take only a few minutes to complete, but they are very important in keeping the program operating smoothly.

## ***Preparing for the Cleanup***

The success of the program 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 *only* as a group and only 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 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 the temporary warning sign, first aid kits, and so on.
- 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.

- If at all possible, arrange for some member of the group to bring along a mobile phone. Being able to call for help from the cleanup site could make all the difference in an emergency.

## ***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.
- Post the temporary warning sign before you begin collecting litter.
- If the weather is warm, be sure you bring plenty of drinking water and schedule frequent breaks.

## ***After the Cleanup***

- Collected litter should remain on the site in view of the road, and SCDOT personnel will pick up the collected litter on the following Monday.
- When you have finished your cleanup you have only a few things left to do:
- Collect and store the equipment (temporary warning signs, safety vests, 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.

## ***Safety First!***

As much as we value our state's beauty, we value our citizens even more. Volunteer groups must follow very strict safety guidelines. We can't afford to lose anyone who cares so much about our state! Please review the following safety procedures before each cleanup.

- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited on a cleanup. Intoxicated participants should be taken home and should not participate.
- Every group should have a first aid kit and mobile phone.
- In warm weather, take frequent drinks of water and frequent breaks and take steps to prevent sunburn.
- Don't try to handle hazardous litter, such as car batteries, discarded syringes, and so on. Inform the maintenance engineer or law enforcement to let them handle these kinds of problems.
- Be very careful handling broken glass. Remind participants not to step or kneel in areas where there might be hidden broken glass.
- Be alert and ready to react to traffic.
- Everyone participating in the cleanup must be wearing an orange safety vest at all times.
- Do not pick up trash from the pavement. Always stay at least five feet away from the edge of the road.
- Work together as a group and walk facing oncoming traffic. Work on one side of the highway at a time.
- Do not engage in horseplay. Demonstrations are not allowed.
- Watch out for bees, wasps, fireants, snakes, poisonous plants and other potential natural hazards (especially if some individuals have allergies). Always look before stepping.
- If youth groups are involved in the cleanup, adult supervision is **required** at all times.
- Stay off of steep slopes.
- Do not bring small children to a cleanup.
- 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.
- Don't try to compress trash into the bags, as sharp objects could cause injury.
- Don't bring knives, machetes, or other such tools that could cause accidental injuries.
- Work will not be performed during inclement weather, or after dark.