

LITTER-FREE EVENT GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND:

Littering is a serious issue at special events. The theory is that this form of littering transfers or is “trained” into the public encouraging increased litter levels.

Cost of event cleanup is significant in terms of time, effort and financially. It is a cost that can be reduced with reasonable expenditures of time and dollars by site administration / management. Events can become “litter free” just as many are “smoke free”.

In essence - this is clearly a case in which an “ounce of prevention can be worth a pound of cure!”

APPROACH:

Event management can move toward a “litter free” goal with a direct benefit of reduced cleanup costs. There are two basic categories of events:

- Fixed events - such as concerts, theaters, festivals, fairs, sporting events and entertainment venues, in essence those events located at a fixed site.
- Moving events - such as parades, bike rides, marathons, hikes, marches, etc. These events are spread over a lineal area and require some additional planning.

Follow these action steps:

1. Develop a management policy/action that supports and encourages litter free events.
2. Establish a “task force” or staff/volunteer assignment to explore and research the current costs, possible approaches, potential savings and development of an implementation plan.
3. Consider these marketing factors/ideas:
 - Develop a public policy statement for the media.
 - Prepare for media coverage - include the policy statement in:
 - News releases/press session
 - Brochures
 - Tickets
 - Programs
 - Sponsor Ads
 - Banners
 - Posters
 - Consider a symbol or mascot.
 - Solicit event sponsors to “endorse/promote” the concept.

- Involve event participants (players, etc.) in promoting the concept.
 - Identify a Litter-Free Event spokesperson as a source of facts and for public/media questions.
 - Implement the “Night Off” concept! At the beginning of the event, introduce members of the maintenance staff and “give them the night/day off.” Tell the audience that in order for hard-working staff to enjoy the evening, it is up to them to leave the area clean.
 - Distribute litter bags to everyone at the gate. Explain the reason for the bags and ask everyone to turn in or dump their filled litter bags at the end of the event. Assure the availability of garbage receptacles or dumpsters.
 - Tape a number to every bag and at the beginning, during and at the end of the event select several numbers for prizes (T-shirts, food coupons, event coupons, etc.)
 - Match trash with cash: announce that you (or local companies and/or merchants) will pledge an amount (10 cents, quarter, dollars, etc.) to KIB or a local charity for every pound of trash collected by spectators at each event. Collect the filled litter bags separately at the end of the event and weigh - publicize the results.
 - If the event is family-oriented, ask for teen volunteers to serve on “trash patrol.” Appoint an appropriate number of volunteers, acknowledge them during the event and consider a donation to the group, school or organization.
 - Ask a local balloonist to volunteer a short flight at the beginning of the event. Hang a banner from the gondola declaring your event to be “litter free.” An inflated tethered balloon can also be effective.
 - Hand out bumper stickers at the gate. These can be sponsored by merchants or local companies supporting “litter free” events.
 - Find Iowa’s Wild Roses: plant or place some “roses” around the event area. Award prizes to those who find them and turn them in with filled litter bags.
 - Establish a booth or central display around litter-free concepts, KIB and other related issues.
 - Provide coupons at events for Hy-Vee i.e. “Clean Up Central” etc.
 - Use KIB’s “wild rose” logo once litter-free goals are reached. Fly a rose flag, or place on billboards, scoreboards, etc.
4. Evaluate program effectiveness in quantitative and qualitative terms.
 5. Recognize outstanding sponsors, event participants, volunteers, workers, etc.
 6. Initiate planning for the next year.

ADDITIONAL FACTORS/ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Provide an outline to the event sponsor or organizing entity defining the requirements that you as the property owner/manager are concerned with and that reflect the “litter-free” concept. These can be translated into:

- a. Bonding conditions.
- b. Deposit stipulations.
- c. Contract details and development.
- d. Permit elements.

2. Review permitting or authorizing (property owner/manager) entity responsibilities. Sample language may include:

- a. Provide the site/facility in a clean condition.
- b. Provide for reasonable access by the waste management service – outline timing for emptying, etc.
- c. Consider the acquisition of waste receptacles, to augment existing numbers and make these available to various events.
- d. Provide litter free training for event organizers / volunteers.

3. Develop pre-event materials by event organizers/promoters.

a. Registration/Ticket Purchase

- 1) Include mention on tickets or a separate handout with the tickets.
- 2) Train registration or ticket staff on “litter free” concepts and encourage them to pass the information on to ticket holders.

b. Promote a “Bring it Back” program: provide litter bags as well as convenient placement of waste receptacles.

c. Develop posters for the event site.

d. Include a litter-free message in all pre-event promotion/marketing – posters, mailers, ads, radio, TV, etc.

e. Schedule periodic actions during the event – “shooting” items to the audience, holding drawings, sending frisbees or other items to participants with a “thanks for not littering” message.

f. Include litter-free tips and information in all registration materials to participants/vendors.

g. Structure and assign clean up/prevention effort responsibilities.

4. Plan promotional activities during the event. These can include:

a. Periodic announcements/endorsements of a “litter-free” event.

b. Special slide for movie theaters during the review and waiting period time.

c. Billboard items on electronic boards with “litter-free” messages.

d. Endorsement comments during the event by performers, actors, singers, musicians, rally leaders, etc.

- e. Provide vendors with training and signage encouraging the “litter-free” concept.
- f. Review disciplinary policies/actions with police/security with regard to littering.

5. Review physical needs - receptacles, dumpsters, pick-up equipment, garbage bags, litter bags, gloves, recycling containers, etc.

- a. Number of receptacles based on attendance estimates and projected audience consumption levels.
- b. Translate above information to strategic locational plan reflecting easy access to waste receptacles, etc. - Must be convenient (people tend not to go more than 15 feet out of their way to dispose of an item).
- c. Clean-up staff during the event should be provided appropriate shirts or markings i.e. This is a “Litter Free Event”. Maintain a clean setting (clean areas discourage littering).
- d. Be assured that the waste contractor and / or staff empty the waste receptacles on a timely basis so that accumulation does not occur.

6. Liability Coverage – Provide for appropriate coverage and protection and “risk training” for clean-up staff, volunteers, etc.

7. Financial requirements to assure that the clean up costs are the full responsibility of the event organizers.

8. Positive reinforcement actions;

- a. Reward or provide incentives or develop a recognition program for those going the extra mile.
- b. Seal of approval concept by KIB on event plan, etc.
- c. Consider a KIB / Litter Free event booth with hand-out items, litter bags, etc.

9. Consider providing promotional products. These can include:

- a. Posters
- b. Brochures
- c. Stickers and other hand out items
- d. Endorsements
- e. Barrel wraps for waste receptacles
- f. Items for the audience.

10. Vendor Considerations

- a. Review type of products, containers and wraps with the idea of encouraging litter reduction / recycling.
- b. Require vendor commitment to litter free event concepts in the contract or agreement.
- c. Develop a placard or sign that can be posted by all vendors indicating their commitment to the “litter free” concept.
- d. Vendor contract / agreement provisions to include efforts at reducing litter and

to encourage recycling.

e. Messages on items / posters at vendor sites, restrooms, etc.

f. Wrap-up or review meeting after event and set the plans for the next event.