

City of Alexandria, Virginia

15

MEMORANDUM

4-9-02

DATE: APRIL 2, 2002  
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*  
SUBJECT: ADOPT-A-BLOCK LITTER PROGRAM

---

**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of a litter program that will encourage a partnership between the City and the public with the goal of maintaining litter free neighborhoods and streets.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council approve the establishment of an Adopt-A-Block Program in Alexandria, as described below, along with the attached Adopt-A-Block Agreement (Attachment 1).

**BACKGROUND:** The Virginia Adopt-A-Highway program was introduced in 1988 by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) in cooperation with the "Keep Virginia Beautiful" project. Since then, the Virginia Adopt-a-Highway program has become the second largest in the United States.

The program was designed to assist the State by funding a litter control program for State maintained roadways such as I-395 and I-495 that do not have regular street sweeping and cleaning or regular sanitation services. Since the City's street cleaning program is not State maintained, it would not be eligible for litter control funding. Other jurisdictions, such as Loudoun County, the Town of Leesburg, and Prince William County, have implemented variations of the State's volunteer litter control program to support their local litter and street cleaning efforts. The goal of these programs is to promote public involvement and help to preserve natural resources in order to maintain the quality of life in the jurisdictions. The efforts of the program volunteers result in cleaner streets and a healthy neighborhood environment.

**DISCUSSION:** The City currently has very comprehensive street cleaning programs, and refuse and recycling services. An Adopt-A-Block program would enhance the overall cleanliness of the City's streets and neighborhoods.

The attached Adopt-A-Block Agreement, and Safety Guidelines (Attachment 2) were coordinated through the City Attorney's office. As outlined in the agreement, only permanently established businesses, government entities or community and public organizations would be

eligible to participate in the program. Each participating group must agree to collect debris at least four times a year at its selected site. T&ES staff would work with each group to schedule one collection event to coincide with the City's annual neighborhood clean up programs. Additionally, groups are expected to adhere to the terms outlined in the Adopt-A-Block Agreement, and to follow all safety guidelines.

The Department of T&ES would provide the group with safety equipment, supplies and materials, and fabricate and install neighborhood signs to warn motorists of the ongoing clean up event. T&ES staff would be responsible for the collection and disposal of all litter collected by the volunteer groups.

If approved, it is recommended that the Adopt-A-Block Program be promoted initially in residential neighborhoods through local citizen associations. The Downtown Maintenance Managers would work to generate participation by business owners during their weekly inspections along King Street.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** It is anticipated that the costs associated with this program would be based on disposal fees, cost of safety equipment, and neighborhood sign fabrication and installation. The costs for the program would be minimal (less than \$100 per event), and could be absorbed in the T&ES operating budget.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment 1: T&ES, Solid Waste Division, Adopt-A-Block Agreement
- Attachment 2. Safety Guidelines

**STAFF:**

- Richard J. Baier, P.E., Director, T&ES
- Ignacio Pessoa, City Attorney
- Arthur Cole, Deputy Director Operations, T&ES
- Alton R. Weaver, Solid Waste Division Chief, T&ES
- David Peregoy, Street Cleaning Superintendent, T&ES



## Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

### Solid Waste Division ADOPT-A-BLOCK AGREEMENT

The City of Alexandria, Virginia, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, hereinafter called the "Department," and \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter called the "Group," recognize the need and the desirability to effect litter-free streets and are entering into this Agreement to permit the Group to contribute toward the effort of maintaining litter-free streets.

#### **BY SIGNATURE BELOW, THE GROUP AGREES TO THE FOLLOWING TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

- Participants shall be at least eight years of age. When participants are 17 years of age or younger, the Group shall furnish adequate supervision, at least one adult for every three children.
- Groups shall adopt a section of roadway that is a minimum of five blocks in length and is required to adopt that section of roadway for a minimum of a two-year period. At the conclusion of the period, Groups may renew their contract, modify, (i.e., choose a different section of the roadway) or end their contract.
- The Group shall collect litter as many times as necessary to keep the area reasonably litter free, (a minimum of four times per year). Although it is not mandatory, the Department would prefer that one of the litter collection dates be planned to coincide with the Department's annual coordinated clean-up events. Those dates are available from the Department's Solid Waste Division, (703) 751-5130.
- The Group acknowledges that the condition of the adopted roadway will have a direct reflection upon the Group and its efforts.
- The Group shall obtain the required litter collection supplies and materials from the Department's Solid Waste Division during regular business hours.

Unexpended materials and supplies furnished by the Department shall be returned to the Department by the Group leader following cleanup.

- The City will not be responsible for injuries to Group members, or for injuries caused by Group members to others, which arise out of cleanup work.

## **Safety Procedures**

The Group leader shall instruct participants to strictly adhere to the following safety procedures throughout the term of this agreement. A review of the safety procedures shall be presented to **all** participants by the Group leader prior to each cleanup event.

- Separate into groups if possible. Participants are strongly encouraged to work closely with at least one other person.
- Concentrate on cleaning one side of the roadway at a time. Do not crisscross the roadway to collect litter.
- Park your vehicle in a legal, on-street space, or attempt to obtain permission to park in a business parking lot or a private driveway. If this is not possible, park the vehicle at least ten feet off the shoulder of the roadway.
- Group participants are encouraged to form car-pools to reach the site.
- While collecting litter, participants shall face oncoming traffic, and be prepared to move out of the way of emergency vehicles or vehicles in emergency situations.
- Avoid overexertion and drink plenty of water, especially on warm muggy days.
- The Group Leader shall place warning signs (furnished by the Department) at either end of the roadway to alert motorists of the litter collection event.
- Be aware of members' allergies, and bring a first-aid kit in case of an emergency.
- Hold a safety refresher session prior to each pickup to remind members of potential safety hazards.
- Be aware of places where snakes may be located, such as around logs or in high grasses. Be alert for stinging bees, poison ivy or oak and noxious weeds (Canadian thistle, wild cucumber, kudzu, etc.)
- To avoid potential injuries to participants, do not overfill or squeeze trash bags, as the bags may contain glass or other sharp objects.
- When each litter collection event has been completed, the Group may leave bags several feet from the roadway, at a central location. The Department would prefer that the bags be placed on a straight stretch of the street rather than on curves or bridges.

**What to wear:**

- Orange safety vests (provided by the Department).
- Gloves to protect hands (provided by the Department) from sharp objects, insects or poison ivy.
- Light-colored clothing for visibility.
- A hat, shirt with long sleeves,
- Leather shoes or boots with ankle support.
- Use sun screen to avoid sunburn.
- Do not wear headphones while collecting litter. You must remain alert at all times to hear and see oncoming traffic or emergency vehicles.

**Do not pickup:**

- Hazardous items, including hypodermic syringes, broken glass, or dead animals. The Group leader shall notify the Solid Waste Division for collection of such items.
- Large, heavy items such as appliances or barrels are to be left for Solid Waste personnel. Inform the Solid Waste Division of these items and their locations.
- Litter on bridges, overpasses, tunnels, construction or mowing sites. These areas are especially dangerous for participants.
- During rush hours, on very hot days, during rain or snow, at dusk or at night, or during holidays.

**THE DEPARTMENT AGREES TO ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING:**

- Install a sign at the entrance to each Adopt-A-Block with the Group name or organization printed in block letters on the blue and white Adopt-A-Block sign.
- Provide vest, trash bags, gloves, safety literature, and safety training to each Group leader.
- Coordinate publicity efforts with the Group to solicit local media coverage.
- Remove filled litter bags from the adopted section following cleanups.
- To remove large, heavy, or hazardous items found and/or reported.

If, in the sole judgement of the Department, it is found that the adopting Group is not meeting the terms and conditions of this agreement, upon 15 days notice, the Department may terminate the adoption agreement and remove the signs, or assign a different section of roadway for the Group's sponsorship. Either option will be the sole discretion of the Department.

Only permanently established businesses, government entities or community and public organizations, will be considered to participate in the Adopt-A-Block Program.

Eligible organization shall comply with local, state, and federal laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, color, age, sexual orientation, or national origin.

The Department recognizes the following Group as the adopting organization for this agreement and the Group accepts the responsibility to collect litter at the following site:

\_\_\_\_\_

And promote a litter-free environment in the community for a period beginning \_\_\_\_\_  
And ending \_\_\_\_\_ ( a minimum of two years).

By signature below, I \_\_\_\_\_, Adopt-a-Block Group representative, have read and fully understand the requirements of the Adopt-A-Block Program and agree to adhere to the conditions and terms of this contract.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Group Representative Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address (physical address required)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Adopting Group

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name to appear on sign  
(If different than name of Group)



# Safety Guidelines

# Adopt-A-Block

## Before you pickup



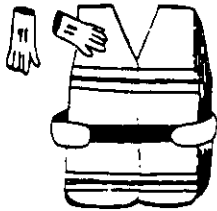
- Carpool to the pick up site to keep roadside parking to a minimum.
- Park your vehicles at the end of roadway clearly off the right-of way.
- Place warning signs (furnished by the Department at either end of the roadway to alert motorists of the litter collection event.
- A review of the safety procedures shall be presented to all participants by the Group Leader prior to each cleanup event.
- Adopting groups shall provide adequate supervision for children under 17 years of age, preferably, at least one adult for every three children.

## The best time to pickup



- Do not pickup during peak travel times when traffic is heavy.
- Work only in daylight and fair weather.
- Never participate in a litter pickup while under the influence of drugs and /or alcohol.

## What to wear



- Always wear an orange safety vest so drivers can easily see you. Put on the vest before you leave the car, so you have it on the moment you are on the side of the road.
- Use sun screen to avoid sunburn.
- In addition to the orange vest, wear brightly colored clothing that protects your arms and legs, as well as hard-soled shoes and work or gardening gloves.
- Do not wear headphones while collecting litter. You must remain alert at all times to hear and see oncoming traffic or emergency vehicles.

## During the pickup



- Always walk facing traffic, and stay with your team.
- Take breaks, drink fluids, and don't overexert yourself.
- Avoid potential injuries to Participants. Do not over fill or squeeze trash bags. They may contain glass or sharp objects.
- Separate into groups if possible. Participants are strongly encouraged to work closely with at least one other person.
- Do not pick up litter in construction or maintenance sites, in tunnels, or on bridges or overpasses.
- Avoid snakes and noxious weeds.
- Do not pick up materials that appear to be hazardous such as hypodermic syringes, broken glass, or dead animals. Contact the Solid Waste Division for Collection at (703) 751-5130
- Concentrate on cleaning one side of the roadway at a time. Do not crisscross the roadway to collect litter.



# Adopt-A-Block Safety Warning Sign



The sign shall be installed to warn motorists of ongoing cleanup operations under the Adopt-A-Block Litter Control Program. Signs shall be erected by the participants below the signs indicating the participant's or organization's name that has adopted that section of roadway.

<b>SHAPE:</b>		Diamond Mesh
<b>COLOR:</b>	Message and Border:	Black (Non-Reflectorized)
		Field: Orange (Reflectorized)
<b>SIZE:</b>		48"
<b>MESSAGE:</b>	Line 1 Capitals:	7"C
	Line 2 Capitals:	7"C
	Line 3 Capitals:	7"C
<b>MARGIN WIDTH:</b>		3/4"
<b>BORDER WIDTH:</b>		1 1/4"
<b>CORNER RADII:</b>		3"