



Parks and Open Space Management

*Saskatchewan Parks and
Recreation Association Inc.*

Litter-Free Handbook





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Introduction and Disclaimer of Liability for Use of the Document

This Parks and Open Space Management Handbook, provides a description of procedures associated with maintenance activities performed within park settings.

The concept of maintenance standards requires the application of best practices within the local operation system. To assist with the establishment of such standards, this resource provides guidelines to aid staff in addressing their daily management operations. There are, however, situations where the standards outlined may require revision by those staff implementing the procedure, to best meet their needs. Specific site conditions, operating budgets, available human resources, and capacity to offer training associated with the practices outlined in this document may warrant alterations to the procedures.

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Keep Our Community and Parks Litter-Free

Strolling through the park, you hear the laughter of children playing. When you stop to rest on a public bench beside an elderly man, he mentions to you how beautifully kept the community is.



You can't help smiling as the elderly man adds how happy he is to live in a community where people of all ages can enjoy such a clean, public environment.

You smile again, telling him that you are actually one of the people who help keep the community clean and safe.

Teasingly, the elderly man says, "Well, you must have an easy job. There's nothing much to clean in this community, is there?"

Once again, you smile politely and say, "Ah, but the garbage containers are empty because somebody emptied them. The community is litter free because somebody swept and picked up all the littered bottles, cans, cigarette butts, and other garbage. The park is safe to play in because somebody disposed of any hazardous materials that may have been lying on the ground, like needles."

"I hope you didn't take offence," the man says sincerely, "when I said there's nothing to clean in this community."

You reply, "Not at all. We actually take pride in making people believe that. You see, in our job the harder you work, the easier it looks."

This time it's the elderly man's turn to smile.





Litter Pick-Up Overview

The sun is shining down on you and you are silently reminding yourself how wonderful it is to work outdoors during our great summers. You are armed with your handy *Litter Picker*, plastic garbage bag and plastic pail and are focused on the task at hand...the collection of litter in our parks and community roadways.



Your *Litter Picker* is a very useful tool that you use to pick up the litter you find on the ground. This tool is a great help as it allows you to pick up litter while you're standing and walking rather than having to bend over to pick it up.

We use a couple of different models. One of the models (shown here) has pinchers at the end of the shaft that you control by squeezing and releasing the handle attached to the top of the shaft. The other model is



simply a long stick with a nail sticking out of the end that you use to stab or spear the litter. This model is very useful for picking up soft, porous items such as paper. However, the nail isn't as useful when picking up hard objects such as glass containers or twigs. Using the *Litter Picker* you collect the miscellaneous litter from the ground and place it in your pail. When working in our community parks remember to pick up all large branches and twigs as you make your way through the park. A large branch or twig can very easily damage a mower. When your pail is full it can be emptied into the garbage bag you brought with you.





Your Day Begins...





Safety Equipment Overview

From your past experience you know the importance of wearing the correct clothing and safety equipment. Recall the standard safety gear used by Parks and Open Space Management workers.

Safety Gear	
	Hard Hat - Required <i>(never worn backwards or over another hat, and worn on all roadways)</i>
	Safety Vest - Required <i>(wear on all roadways)</i>
	CSA Approved Safety Boots - Required
	Work Gloves - Required
	Safety Glasses - Recommended
	Ear Plugs - Recommended



Safety First!

Because used hypodermic needle can transfer diseases such as AIDS or Hepatitis C it's very important that you are very careful when picking up and disposing of hypodermic needles. Always use the Biohazard containers you've been provided with. Should you feel uncomfortable picking up needles, you can contact your supervisor. (For more information refer to our "Needle Collection Guidelines").





Outdoor Vacuum Cleaners



The outdoor vacuum cleaners (sometimes called a “Billy Goat”) are used on hard surfaces such as concrete, asphalt and paving stones. They vacuum up any sand, cigarette butts and leaves that have collected on the sidewalks and pathways. You soon learn that these machines are very noisy. Since you know how important it is that the people enjoy the time they spend in our parks, avoid using the vacuum during high traffic times.



Safety First!

Because these vacuums are very loud, always wear your earplugs or other hearing protection.

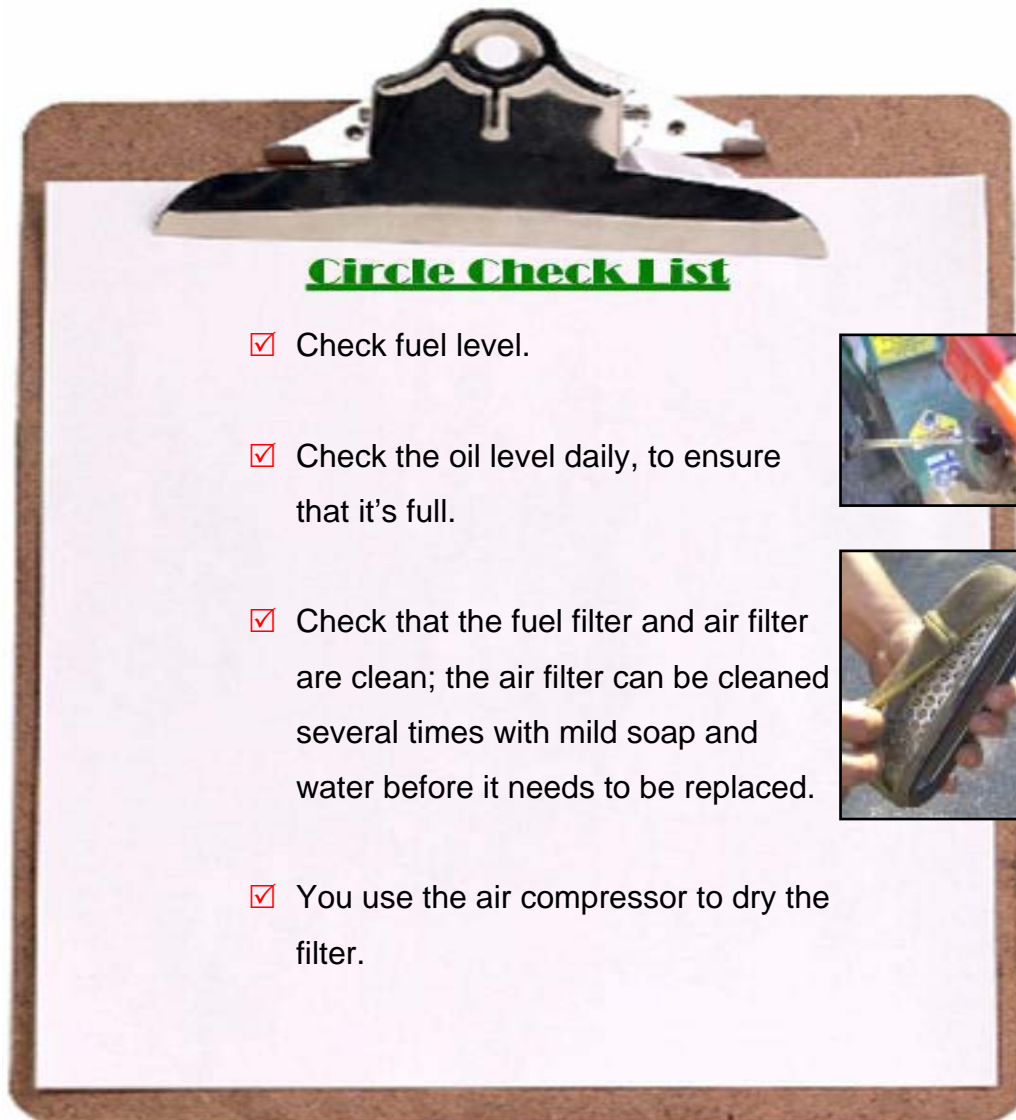
Remember to wear your safety glasses to protect your eyes from any dust or small particles that can be discharged from these vacuums.





Outdoor Vacuum Cleaner Circle Check

Do your circle check before operating the outdoor vacuum cleaners.





Outdoor Vacuum Cleaners

Here are the steps to follow when operating the outdoor vacuum cleaner:



To Turn the Vacuum on:

1. Turn on the fuel shut-off valve.
2. Turn the choke on.
3. Place your foot on the base of the machine so it won't move.
4. Pull the cord.
5. Turn the choke off.



To Turn the Vacuum off:

1. Turn the fuel shut-off valve to the "off" position.





Emptying Garbage Containers

In order to keep our community looking clean and well-kept, we ensure the garbage containers in our parks are emptied regularly.

1. If the canister is the type with a protective casing, the casing will have to be removed. Some garbage containers in our parks will be enclosed in a locked garbage casing. These casings surround the garbage can and prevent vandals from emptying it and spreading garbage and litter throughout the park.
2. Remove the lid of the garbage can.
3. If there are recyclable bottles or cans that are on top of the garbage they can be removed. These can be recycled and the funds put towards a community project. It can be dangerous to dig through the garbage bag looking for bottles and cans to recycle because a hypodermic needle or other sharp object could poke you. It's a great way to be able to contribute to a community project but it's not wise to take a chance on getting hurt so you should only pick the bottles and cans that are sitting on top of the garbage.





Emptying Garbage Containers Continued...

4. Remove the garbage bag and make sure you keep the garbage bag away from your body. There could be needles or sharp objects inside.
5. Tie the bag.
6. Replace the old bag with a new one checking that the new bag is secure around the rim of the garbage container. You may have to tie a knot in the top edge of the bag to make sure the bag is securely fastened to



the garbage can so that it won't slip down inside the can as garbage is added to the container.

7. Check the condition of the container. If the garbage container is dirty, give it a good cleaning. If the garbage container is damaged notify your supervisor/lead person and they will arrange for a replacement.

8. Put the lid back in place.
9. If the garbage can is enclosed in one of our protective casings, ensure that the garbage container is sitting level on the ground.



Safety First!

Keep all full garbage bags away from your body and at arms length and never push down on the bag in an effort to compact the contents. There could be sharp objects in the bag that could injure you.





Turf Truck (sometimes called a Mule)

The Turf Truck is a small vehicle that is used most often in parks where we don't like to, or can't, drive the regular trucks. This vehicle is used much like a wheelbarrow.

It's used to transport tools, full garbage bags, soil and other items that are required to keep the park maintained and litter-free. If you're required to operate this vehicle, you'll be shown how to perform a circle and maintenance check.



Safety First!

**Never leave the turf truck running
and unattended!**





Bulletin Boards

While keeping our parks and roadsides garbage-free is a big job, we are also responsible for making sure the other facilities located in our parks are maintained and neat. That's why you should make it a practice of checking any bulletin boards located in the park and remove any weathered or past-dated material. Posters and other information are added to these bulletin boards by the public, usually with staples, push pins



and tacks. When a poster or notice is removed from the bulletin board, it is important that you dispose of any staples or thumbtacks that have fallen to the ground in these areas. Have you ever walked barefoot through the park? If you haven't, just imagine a small person running through the park in bare feet on a warm summer day and stepping on one of these sharp items!

Graffiti

Our area prides itself on staying graffiti-free. It's the extra efforts you take that make the difference. When you see graffiti on public benches, rocks or concrete surfaces, be sure to advise your supervisor, they will supply you with either the proper equipment or tell you who to contact in order to return the damaged item to its original state.





Collection of Litter Along High Speed Roadways

Parking Crew Vehicles

Litter is regularly collected on high-speed roadways. Because motorists are traveling at high speeds, it's important that you're extremely careful and aware of your surroundings when pulling over to park your vehicle on a high-speed roadway to do your litter pick-up.



To turn the vacuum off:

Turn the fuel shut-off valve to the "off" position.

Steps to Follow when Parking the Vehicle:

1. Proceed slowly to the shoulder using the beacon and 4-way signal lights.
2. Pull off the shoulder to the far edge of the mower strip along the roadway to park your vehicle.

With all of the traffic coming and going on these roadways, it's important that you keep your eyes and ears open at all times.





Naturalized Roadways

Some of our roadways are left in their natural state. These roadways only require mowing once or twice a year, depending on the amount of rainfall. Because any litter that may be in these areas is easier to collect before it goes through the mower blades, a crew will perform a “trash collection blitz” prior to having these areas mowed. You can use your Litter Picker to pick up small items. Typically you’re told that you should be picking up any items that are larger than a pop can. Once you fill your garbage bag, load it onto the truck.



As well, larger items that won’t fit into a garbage bag such as cardboard boxes, tires, and large tree branches are loaded directly onto the truck. If the object is extremely large or heavy, call your supervisor. When you find a dead animal, either domestic or wild, you call your supervisor for instructions on the correct procedure for disposing of the animal.



Safety First!

It is critically important that you wear your safety vest when working along side high-speed roadways.





At the End of the Day

At the end of each day, as you glance around your area, you can take comfort in a job well done. You notice a mother leaning against a tree with a book lazily cradled in her lap as she watches her children playing.



An elderly gentleman is enjoying the sun on a park bench as he waits for the bus. You share in the feeling that you have helped create a welcoming environment that can be enjoyed by all who pass through or stay for a while in our parks.





Picking Up Litter

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Task: To maintain litter-free park and community spaces; to regularly empty garbage containers and; to periodically collect litter and garbage along the road.

Tools and Equipment:

- ☐ Litter Pickers and pail
- ☐ Outdoor Vacuum Cleaner
- ☐ Garbage bags

Additional Safety Equipment Required:

- ☐ Approved gloves
- ☐ Safety vest
- ☐ Steel-toed boots



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Procedural Tips for Parks and Green Spaces:

- ☐ As you make your way through the park, be sure to pick up twigs so that they don't cause damage to mowers.
- ☐ Use the Outdoor Vacuum Cleaner to clean concrete/asphalt where debris such as sand, cigarette butts and leaves are evident.
- ☐ Use the litter pickers to safely pick up pieces of litter and deposit them in the pail. When the pail is full, empty it into a plastic bag you pull from your back pocket.
- ☐ Keep garbage bags away from your body when removing them from the container and then tie the bag to close it. Place a new bag in the container and make sure it securely fits around the rim and won't slip down as it fills up. Note: If the garbage container is dirty, clean it before replacing the bag.
- ☐ Place the lid securely back on once the bag has been replaced. Finally, make sure the garbage can is sitting level on the ground.
- ☐ If you come across used needles, always use Biohazard containers to dispose of them.
- ☐ If you come across graffiti on public property, contact your supervisor for the proper tools to remove it.
- ☐ Always remove expired, wet or overly cluttered materials from bulletin boards. Also, dispose of any staples and thumbtacks that have fallen on the ground near bulletin boards to prevent them from injuring anyone.

Procedural Tips for Collecting Litter Along the Highway:

- ☐ Park the vehicle off the shoulder of the road and at the bottom of the ditch if conditions are dry. If you must remain on the shoulder because of wet conditions, be sure to pull as far over as possible and make sure the hazard lights are flashing.
- ☐ When picking up litter along the grassy or naturalized portion of the road collect:
 - highly visible litter that's the size of a pop can or larger.
 - dead animals the size of a cat or smaller, (Public Works disposes of larger animals.)



Maintenance

- ☐ Check the oil level daily and make sure it's full.
- ☐ Check that the oil is clean and change it when needed using 15/30 motor oil.
- ☐ Check the fuel level in the morning and constantly throughout the day and keep it full.
- ☐ Check the fuel and make sure air filters are clean. The air filter can be cleaned several times, using mild soap and water before it needs to be replaced. After washing the air filter make sure the foam is completely dry before using it again.



Operation

- ☐ Always wear proper ear and eye protection because the Outdoor Vacuum Cleaner is loud and disperses a lot of dust.
- ☐ To start the Outdoor Vacuum Cleaner, turn on the fuel shut-off valve, put the choke up, place your foot on the base of the machine so it won't move and pull the cord. When turning it off make sure the shut-off valve is off.
- ☐ Always wear a safety vest when operating the Outdoor Vacuum Cleaner near a street and avoid using it when people are around or during high-traffic times.

