

COASTSWEEP GUIDELINES

Cleanup Safety and Proper Materials Handling

Local cleanup coordinators are responsible for providing these instructions to all volunteers before each cleanup. If you have any questions prior to your cleanup, please contact us at coastswEEP@mass.gov.

General Safety

1. Work in teams of two or more. All children must be supervised by an adult.
2. Wear gloves and closed-toe shoes at all times, and wear adequate clothing and sun-block to prevent sunburn.
3. Avoid over-exertion, heat exhaustion, and dehydration. Come in early at the first sign of fatigue.
4. Do not lift anything too heavy—when in doubt, do not try.
5. Do not touch or pick up animals—alive or dead. See below for additional information on marine mammals and sea turtles.
6. Stay off dunes to prevent erosion and trampling of beachgrass and other vegetation (and to avoid poison ivy).
7. Beware of broken glass, rusty items, and other sharp materials. Handle with extreme care or treat as a hazardous item (see below).
8. **DO NOT touch any hazardous items.** (See below.)

Trash Disposal

Develop a plan to properly dispose of collected trash well in advance of the cleanup. Discuss disposal options with property manager. **DO NOT** dispose of trash bags in full or overflowing trash cans. It may be necessary to bring collected trash home for disposal with your household waste.

What to Pick Up

Only collect human-created items (plastics, metal, glass, food packaging, cigarette butts, etc.). Please do not pick up any intact commercial fishing gear (see below). Sewage treatment disks can be picked up, but use gloves. Natural debris (seaweed, kelp, driftwood, etc.) is part of the natural system and should be left in place. Avoid disturbing plants and animals. **Do not touch any of the hazardous items discussed below.**

Hazardous Items

*The following materials are potentially hazardous and **SHOULD NEVER** be handled by volunteers or local cleanup coordinators. Volunteers should notify the cleanup coordinator about these items, and the coordinator should mark the area and contact appropriate trained personnel. See the **2025 COASTSWEEP Welcome Letter** (sent with supplies) for instructions on identifying the appropriate personnel **BEFORE** the cleanup and having a plan in place for hazardous items.*

- **Syringes/needles**
- **Metal drums**
- **Potentially live fireworks**
- **“Bottle bombs”** (Common household chemicals mixed in plastic bottles can generate a chemical reaction that causes the bottle to explode. Capped plastic bottles with liquid inside [typically brown liquid, sometimes containing bits of aluminum foil or other objects] are potentially hazardous.)

Data Collection

Ocean Conservancy is now collecting data through the Clean Swell mobile app, which is available for Apple and Android phones. Data cards are still available and should be ordered through the Cleanup Coordinator Sign-Up Form. For volunteers planning to use the app, one person on each team should be designated to be the data collector. See the Clean Swell Mobile Application Instructions included with your supplies and have each data collector install the app on their phone. Additional copies of the instructions can be downloaded at: <https://www.mass.gov/media/2318301/download>, or scan this QR Code with your phone's camera to open the link.



PLEASE NOTE: To ensure cleanup location is properly saved in the application, please enter all data at cleanup site. If this is not possible, you can select “Record a past cleanup” from the app home page (scroll right). On the first screen you can enter the actual location details.

Stranded Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles

If you find any stranded whales, dolphins, porpoises, or sea turtles (dead or alive), please immediately call the appropriate Massachusetts stranding response agency listed below. Seals on the beach can be a normal occurrence. If seals have any obvious injuries, gunky eyes, or seem underweight, call the appropriate marine animal rescue agency below. For more information, see the **New England Aquarium Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Program website** at: <https://www.neaq.org/conservation-and-research/studying-and-protecting/sea-turtle-rescue/>.

Turtles

- **Boston to New Hampshire** - New England Aquarium 24-hour Sea Turtle Rescue Hotline at **(617) 973-5247**
- **South Shore, Cape Cod, and the Islands** - Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary at **(508) 349-2615 x6104**

Seals, Dolphins, or Whales

- **Salisbury to Essex** - Seacoast Science Center at **(603) 997-9448**
- **Rockport to Plymouth** - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at **(866) 755-6622**
- **Cape Cod and Southeastern Massachusetts** - International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) at **(508) 743-9548**
- **Martha's Vineyard** - NOAA at **(866) 755-6622**
- **Nantucket** - Marine Mammal Alliance Nantucket at **(833)-667-6626**

Once these response agencies receive your call, they may dispatch field volunteers to collect valuable data. If you need to leave a message, please leave your name, phone number, the type of animal and the condition, and a good description of the location the animal can be found. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Fishing Gear

If you find intact fishing gear (such as lobster pots or buoys), or fragments of fishing gear that contain identification numbers, do not remove the gear. Instead, note any identification numbers and report them to the Massachusetts Environmental Police Dispatcher (“MEP”) at (617) 626-1665 or (800) 632-8075. If you find fishing gear debris with no identification number that is clearly damaged beyond use as fishing gear, such debris may be removed and disposed of or recycled. Examples include fragments of gear, frayed rope, or a rusted wire trap that is smashed beyond salvage. If you are in doubt about whether fishing gear debris is salvageable for use in fishing, contact MEP as described above.