

Leader checklist

Introduction

Here's a list of all the things to think about if you are leading a day task.

In the week before the Task

- Make contact with a member of the Management Group:
 - Agree what you will be doing, discuss the tools that will be required and ensure that any necessary materials will be available.
 - Agree where you will be working, when you will meet and where you will meet.
 - Find out how many volunteers are booked up for the task
 - Ask them to identify any particular hazards that you need to be aware of.
 - Get their contact details for the day (e.g. their mobile number or the site telephone number), in case you have a problem and need to call them before you arrive on site.
- Think about how and where you will be doing the task and do a **risk assessment**.
- If there are any special techniques which will be needed then make sure that appropriate training has been undertaken.

On the day of the Task

- Before leaving your house make sure that you have remembered:
 - The list of who's coming.
 - Contact details for a member of the Management Group, in case you have a problem and need to call them before you arrive on site.
 - Check that the tools you need are fit for use.

- Meet the volunteers at the designated point:
 - Hand round the task record form to collect names.
 - Welcome any new volunteers warmly.
 - If there are any new or newish faces on board, introduce yourself, explain a little about the site and explain the reason we are working there
 - Turn volunteers away politely if:
 - They are underequipped and you cannot provide them sufficient basic kit and the nature of the task and / or weather conditions will cause them to be at risk.
 - They are Under 16 and unaccompanied (make sure they can get home).
 - They are drunk, drugged or otherwise incapable.
- Wait until you've got everyone or until 10 mins past agreed meeting time. Don't wait any longer.

On Task - before starting work

- When you arrive:
 - Try to identify any potential hazards on the site immediately.
 - Keep an eye on new volunteers, making sure that they know what is going on.
 - Make sure that the first aid kits are taken out.
- Give a brief talk about the site and its importance.
- Give the tool and safety talk. The length of the talk will depend on whether you can see any new faces who need more explanation and reassurance. Things to think about:
 - What are you doing and how are you doing it?
 - How should each tool be used? How should it be carried? How should it be left when not in use. See the [Tool Safety page](#).
 - Based on your pre-task consideration of the hazards, risks, and mitigation measures and anything new you have added since your arrival tell the volunteers about the hazards and risks on the site.
 - Point out the hazards;
 - Explain how big a risk they pose:
 - How likely is an accident?
 - How serious could it be?

- Tell the volunteers what to do to minimise the risks. For example:
 - What is difficult or dangerous about the work? How can risks of back damage, eye damage, burns, cuts etc be minimised?
 - What is difficult or dangerous about the work site? Steep slopes? Deep water? Slippery? Congested?
 - What environmental problems are there? Hot weather - sunburn, dehydration, heat stroke? Cold weather - hypothermia, icy ground? Rain - slippery ground, slippery tools, hypothermia?
- Who are the first aiders? Is there a doctor in the house?
- What time are you going to stop for a tea break or for lunch?

On Task - Getting Started

- Divide the volunteers into suitable work teams. Try to have mix of abilities, and make sure that new volunteers are being looked after by experienced volunteers.
- Make sure that each team knows exactly what it is doing and has a sensible and achievable goal.
- As soon as you have got everyone working busily away, you can start work yourself. However you must never get so involved in what you are doing that you stop checking that:
 - Everyone knows what they should be doing and is busy doing it
 - Everyone has all the tools and materials they need. If there are shortages, can you re-deploy volunteers so that the shortages are removed?
 - Everyone is happy and healthy
 - Nobody is doing anything dangerous, or beginning work on something that will become dangerous
 - Check that all the tools are being used correctly and stored safely.
- Review your risk assessment regularly in the light of any changes in the task or the conditions or any issues raised by volunteers. If there are any new hazards and control measures then communicate these to the volunteers.
- Be prepared to take corrective action, which may involve asking volunteers to redo work. The more often you check progress, the less likely it is that you will need to go back over work that you have already done.

On Task - breaks

- It's up to you to decide when to take breaks to fit the needs of the group and the task. As a general guide though, try not to have volunteers working for more than two hours without a break.
- During any lunch or tea breaks, make sure that any new volunteers aren't being left out of the conversation, and that they get their fair share of tea and biscuits.

At the end of the Task

- As home time approaches, make sure the volunteers know when you plan to leave and that they do not start any work that they will not be able to finish.
- When it is time to stop, make sure everyone knows that you have stopped work. Gather and clean all the tools and check that you have everything that you brought with you.
- Check the site to make sure
 - that you have left it tidy and that there is no half-finished work.
 - that there are no tools or personal belongings lying forgotten;
 - that you have left no litter.
- Thank volunteers sincerely for their efforts, particularly any new faces.
- Fill in the post-task section of the task sheet.