



Volunteer Manual



What is the Adopt-a-Park Program?

The Adopt-a-Park Program is a year-round program for volunteers to help maintain and care for trees, flowers and shrub beds in their local park. The ultimate goal of the Adopt-a-Park Program is to engage park users and community groups in creating and preserving clean and safe parks for everyone. Volunteer clean up efforts create great parks and great parks make great neighbourhoods!

Eligible sites

Please check the Town's website for the eligible sites.

How it works

Adopt-a-Park groups sign up and agree to care for a park for three years. The group must host litter clean ups, add woodchips or mulch for trees, remove or report graffiti and weed shrub beds at least three times each year.

Many groups hold events to promote park usage or fundraise for park enhancements such as benches, trees, play structures, and more.

What are the benefits of adopting a park?

Volunteer commitment to local neighbourhood is crucial in keeping our parks system clean, safe and beautiful. A beautiful and vibrant neighbourhood park attracts users and volunteers, increasing pride in the surrounding area.

Participating Adopt-a-Park groups are recognized with a sign with the group's name; in recognition of the group's efforts.

As an Adopt-a-Park partner you can:

- Help beautify parks and community
- Gain a sense of community and civic pride
- Help preserve natural resources
- Enjoy the benefits of outdoor activity
- Help reduce crime and vandalism
- Lead by example in keeping Niagara-on-the-Lake clean & green!

What is the role of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake?

The Town will:

- Provide regular maintenance in all Town parks
- Help you choose a park and determine what you can do to improve the park
- Provide support to Adopt-a-Park groups when needed, including volunteer management and safety training
- Receive and review park and trail comments and incident reports
- Provide the tools you'll need for a successful clean-up (litter & recycling bags, gloves, yard waste bags and safety information)
- Pick up garbage, recycling, and yard waste if needed

Adopt-a-Park enrolment process

1. Fill out the application form available online at www.notl.org/cib

2. Email or mail the application to:

Email: adoptapark@notl.com

Mail:

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake – Parks & Recreation Division

1593 Four Mile Creek Road – PO Box 100

Virgil, ON

L0S 1T0

3. The Town will arrange to meet with you to complete the process of adopting a park.

Requests are processed on a first come, first served basis. If more than one group requests the same park at the same time, a lottery will be held to choose which group will adopt the park. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake makes the final decision to allow a group to adopt a park.

Volunteer responsibilities

Volunteers participating in the Adopt-A-Park program must:

- Appoint or select a group representative to act on behalf of the group
- Attend annual Adopt-a-Park training session
- Be familiar with "Safety Guidelines for Volunteers" before participating in a clean-up of the adopted park. It is the responsibility of the group representative to assure all volunteers have received safety training before they participate.
- Obey and abide by all laws and regulations relating to safety and such terms and conditions as may be required by the Town
- Make arrangements for off road parking or shuttle bus-type of travel to the worksite
- Provide transportation, supervision, safety equipment and medical/first aid service
- Host a clean up at least three (3) times each year and place wood chips around trees at least once (1) each year or as required
- Wear a Town-approved safety vest when near a roadway
- Wear appropriate safety apparel during the clean-up; such as safety glasses and protective gloves (if required)
- Not pick up litter on roads, paved or gravel shoulders, medians, bridges,

tunnels, overpasses, or around other structures or locations that could pose a danger

- Wear clothing that will not impair vision or movement during the pick-up
- Ensure that no individual under the age of thirteen (13) is present at the work site without a parent or guardian's permission
- Provide supervision by one adult (18 years of age or older) for every ten (10) or less volunteers under 13 years of age
- Ensure no volunteer possesses or consumes illegal drugs or alcohol immediately before or during an Adopt-a-Park clean up
- Suspend Adopt-a-Park activities when weather conditions become inclement (i.e. fog, rain, drizzle, high wind, electrical storms, etc.)
- Ensure that pets are on a leash and that no potentially dangerous animals are present that could inflict injury or disease (i.e. bite, scratch or disease transmission such as rabies from raccoons, skunks, foxes, etc.)
- Work only during daylight hours (1 hour after sunrise and 1 hour before sunset)
- Flag closed containers, heavy objects, or suspicious hazardous materials for pick-up and disposal by Town staff. Contact Town staff at 905-468-3266 for removal of hazardous materials.
- Ensure that no signs, posters, or other display materials are posted in the adopted park during or between clean-ups
- Put garbage bags at the designated pick-up site(s) as pre-arranged by the Town and the group representative
- Notify the Town immediately after each clean-up to have garbage bags and debris removed

Before you begin your Adopt-a-Park event:

1. Ensure that all participants complete the volunteer participant list. Participants under 18 years of age must have the signature of their parent or guardian.
2. Ensure that you have discussed the safety tips and regulations. Identify, evaluate and eliminate Health & Safety risks to ensure that hazards are managed.
3. Make sure you have all tools and materials required to complete your clean up safely and efficiently. Check that your equipment is in good working condition.
4. If you have any questions, call (905)-468-3266 x 266.

After your event:

1. Ensure that you group leader keeps all Adopt-a-Park participant lists. A copy of the list needs to be email to adoptapark@notl.com. A picture of the list is acceptable.
2. Please call 905-468-3266 x 266 to make arrangements to return any unused supplies or for removal of bulk items.

Safety first!

Under no circumstance is the welfare of a volunteer to be compromised during a clean up.

Health & Safety information

Identify, evaluate and eliminate Health & Safety risks to ensure that hazards are managed.

- Gloves and/or hand protection shall be worn at all times while engaged in clean-up activities
- Appropriate footwear must be worn while work is being performed. Sandals are not permitted
- Loose or hanging jewelry and clothing must not be worn in any area where it could get caught and cause bodily harm
- Volunteers should avoid working alone in secluded areas. Pair volunteers to work together in these areas.
- Volunteers should avoid working or coming into contact with infectious materials (any device such as a needle, syringe, or item that could cut or puncture and cause infection, disease, or infect an open wound). Volunteers must notify the group representative who then must notify Town staff. Only properly trained coordinators or Town staff is permitted to remove these items.
- Volunteers are not permitted to work under the influence of drugs, alcohol, etc.
- Do not pick up anything that is too awkward or too heavy
- When lifting, remember to stand close to the load with your feet spread shoulder width apart, with one foot slightly in front of the other for balance. Squat down bending at the knees (do not bend at your waist). Tuck your chin while keeping your back as vertical as possible. Get a firm

grasp of the object before beginning the lift. Begin slowly lifting with your LEGS by straightening them. Never twist your body during this step. Once the lift is complete, keep the object as close to your body as possible. As the load's center of gravity moves away from your body, there is a dramatic increase in stress to the lumbar region of your back. If you must turn while carrying the load, turn using your feet-not your torso. To place the object below the level of your waist, follow the same procedures in reverse order. Remember, keep your back as vertical as possible and bend at the knees.

Sunblock or sunscreen

- Sun protection is a vital concern. For your own protection, sunblock or sunscreen should be applied prior to starting your clean up. You are required to provide your own sun protection. It will not be provided by the Town

Insect repellent

- For your own protection, you should have a good repellent, and keep your pant cuffs tucked into your socks or boots. You are required to provide your own insect repellent. It will not be provided by the Town.

Emergency Response

- Bring a phone to call for help (9-1-1) in case of an emergency.
- After calling emergency services, please call (905) 468-3266 x266 to report the incident. Complete an Incident Report Form for each incident.

First aid kits

- A first aid kit is provided. The kit should be readily available. It should include, at a minimum, bandages, a compression bandage, antiseptic swabs and tweezers. A member of your group must be trained in basic first aid and emergency procedures in order to properly administer first aid.

Hand washing

- Always wash your hands after each clean up with soap and water or a hand sanitizer.

Safety first! Under no circumstance is the welfare of a volunteer to be compromised during a clean-up.

Contacts

Adopt-a-Park Program Information:

Operations Department - Parks & Recreation Division

Tel: (905) 468-3266 x 266

Email: adoptapark@notl.com

Website: www.notl.org/cib

Mailing Address:

1593 Four Mile Creek Road

PO Box 100

Virgil, ON

L0S 1T0

Life threatening emergencies:

911

Non-life threatening emergencies:

Niagara Regional Police

(905) 688-4111

Graffiti reporting:

Call 911 to report graffiti in progress.

Call (905) 468-3266 x 266 to report existing graffiti.

Vandalism:

Vandalism should be reported immediately to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake by calling (905) 468-3266 x 266.

Adopt-a-Park partnership conditions:

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has the right to terminate an agreement if an Adopt-a-Park group does not meet the terms and conditions of the program agreement. The Town may establish other procedures and requirements for the administration of its Adopt-a-Park program at any time.

Planning tips:

1. Organize clean ups around Earth Day in April, or during the fall after the leaves have dropped. Spread the word to your neighbours and people in your local community to get them excited about a park clean up. Keep a list of those who have interest in helping out and keep them informed of the time and day of the big clean up. A simple email list or a Facebook page will keep your group engaged.
2. Tour the park and observe the litter there. Determine how the litter will be disposed of: i.e. garbage, recyclable, leaf and yard waste. Flag & leave hazardous material or waste for Town staff to collect.
3. Remove glass bottles before they are broken.
4. Divide volunteers into groups and have some pick up litter, some remove graffiti, and others weed shrub beds or mulch the trees. Volunteers who are well organized, accomplish more.
5. All the tools and equipment you will need to help make your park look great will be dropped off at the park the day of the organized clean up.
6. Report vandalism. Call (905) 468-3266 to report vandalism, including graffiti.

Ideas for Adopt-a-Park Partners:

Getting involved is easy. Your group could organize any or all of the following suggested activities:

- Host a 'Youth Park Stewardship' event (adopters host a cleanup event or environmental stewardship activity for youth to earn community service hours within their own community)
- Litter cleanups and tree plantings
- Host a 'Playground Environmental Play-Day' event
- Host and monitor a 'park safety' or community watch program
- Host a community lawn or garden workshop in the park

Your group acts as a goodwill ambassador; teaching others to respect and safeguard their neighbourhood parks.

Please remember, before you engage in any of these additional Adopt-a-Park activities and projects to contact Town staff for assistance, permission and support.

Any one of these events can provide Adopt-a-Park Partners an opportunity to get active and contribute (whether through a cleanup, event or environmental stewardship activity) to their community's park!

Graffiti Removal Initiatives:

Keeping our park system beautiful is everyone's responsibility. By taking the time and effort to remove graffiti from underpasses, bridges, signs, picnic tables, facility walls and other sports venue amenities, Adopt-a-Park Partners are taking pride in their community and making a difference.

Every Tree Counts:

Tree planting activities are a great way to engage your group in making a positive impact on the environment while beautifying your community. With input and guidance from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Parks Department, tree planting activities are easy to organize. With thorough preplanning, tree plantings can be accommodated during the spring and fall seasons.

Tree mulching reduces the number of weeds that compete with trees for vital nutrients and water. Adopt-a-Park groups are encouraged to woodchip or mulch trees in their parks. Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will provide all the woodchips required at no charge.

Discussion and planning with Town representative must occur before any trees are planted or mulched.

Host a Community Open House Event in the Park

Get your community involved by hosting a Community Open House at your adopted green space or park! Work with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake staff and community organizations to development a team to organize an event. A Community Open House in your Park can engage your community to do something informative and positive in your neighbourhood:

- Information on current Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake programs and services;
- Recreation brochures and information
- Environmental games and experiments
- Water and Energy Conservation
- Put Waste in the Right Place- the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse & Recycle)

Lots of great ideas:

Adopt-a-Park Partners are encouraged to research, design and organize their own ideas and initiatives for park projects, events and activities. Please take the time to discuss your options with other members of your group and prepare a proposal to Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Parks department. (Please note: staff assistance, materials and equipment are subject to availability).

When brainstorming keep the following principals in mind;

- Safety is vital.
- How will the idea impact park users?
- How will it be maintained?
- What funding is in place for sustainability?

There are many safety and equipment regulations to be considered when enhancing parks. Always take weather conditions and Town bylaws into consideration when determining what may work for you park.

All maintenance projects and activities must be pre-approved by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Parks Department.

Share your Successes!

Volunteers, neighbourhoods and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake want to know about your efforts and successes! We encourage Adopt-a-Park groups to share their success on social media and in local and community newspapers & newsletters.

Send us photos and stories and post on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Town.of.NOTL/>