



# **ORGANISER'S GUIDE OF OCEAN INITIATIVES**





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If during the organization of your collection you need any advice or help from Surfrider, such as information on a type of waste, its impact, its origins, etc... do not hesitate to ask via the online contact form and [we will quickly respond to all of your questions!](#)

One of the 30 Surfrider volunteer chapters could be near you, [don't hesitate to contact them!](#)

# INTRODUCTION

***Oceans Initiative is one of Surfrider Foundation Europe's flagship programmes. It was started more than twenty years ago by thousands of volunteers across the globe with one common objective: to combat the marine litter that pollutes our oceans, lakes, rivers and the seafloor.***

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Firstly, we'd like to thank you for being prepared to be part of this with us.**

This year, we continue our fight against litter being continually discharged into our oceans. That is why we need your help to protect the environment and to raise awareness amongst those around you.

In order to help you organising your Ocean Initiative, we have developed this guide which contains information that you will need to undertake your event.

In this document, you'll find the following:

- Information on the problem of marine litter
- How to organise an Ocean Initiative (what to do before, during and after)
- How to host an educational event
- How to quantify litter collected and fill out the report form.

## CONTEXT

Approximately 20 million tonnes of waste are discharged into the ocean every year, all of human origin.

The majority of marine litter is generated on land. They are from land-based activities, or from poor waste management, and are carried into the marine environment via rivers, sanitation networks and wind. Marine-based human activity (such as fishing, shellfish/fish farming, shipping) also generates waste.

Marine litter in general and plastics in particular harm the marine environment in various ways. Whether it's ingestion, entanglement or entrapment, it's estimated that 690 species are affected by marine litter. Furthermore, there are worrying concerns about impacts on the environment and to species (humans included) as a result of chemical bioaccumulation and discharge from marine plastics. Scientists fear that over time marine litter (or chemical elements) some of which are endocrine disruptors, will accumulate in the food chain.

It is therefore in this context that Surfrider hopes to contribute via its Ocean Initiatives program.



# OCEAN INITIATIVES

## THE PRINCIPAL IS SIMPLE

**The principal is simple: to offer an easy, accessible opportunity to anyone hoping to throw themselves into an environmental initiative. It allows people to organise a litter collection on beaches, lake or rivers, and raise awareness amongst participants about the problem of marine litter.**

Ocean Initiatives (OI) are organised all year round, with a collection highlight organized during the first weekend of spring. This particular event brings a maximum of collections together, offering a valuable media opportunity and good publicity, raising awareness about the large numbers of participants across Europe and the world.



# ORGANISE YOUR COLLECTION



## BEFORE THE EVENT

### REGISTER YOUR COLLECTION ON THE WEBSITE

If you have not already done it, start [by registering your collection on the website](#). This will officially launch your Ocean Initiative and will make it visible on the Surfrider website and by other participants. The registration of your Ocean Initiative will also allow us to help you organise your event throughout.

The registration process is simple and intuitive, and all the information that you'll need is provided on the website.

#### Choosing a location and date.

Choose a location that is easily accessible to the public, doesn't present any major participant safety issues (e.g. steep or high river banks, tides). Certain zones that you may be proposing to work in could be managed by various institutions/organisations (e.g. ONF, Natura 2000, Conservatoire du littoral, Aires Marines Protégées etc.) or present special features, such as being classified as nest building zones. These organisations must be informed by letter that you are planning to hold an event. We suggest that you verify this information as early as possible with the relevant council and advise those concerned.

### WAIT FOR YOUR COLLECTION KIT TO ARRIVE

As indicated on the website, as soon as you register your event, we will send you a free kit containing some material that should be of use to you during your collection.

This kit will be made up of material you have chosen on the 'Kit' tab on the registration page online (bags, gloves, banners, posters...)

#### Keep an eye out for emails from the delivery agency.

If you have ordered an organizer kit, you will receive an email following the registration of your collection. This email will include a URL link or a tracking number, which will allow you to track your package. If you do not receive this email, please check in your spam folder.

#### Return of the kit to Surfrider after three delivery attempts.

Track your delivery and make sure you are at your chosen delivery location on the day of delivery. The courier will attempt to deliver the kit three times, after which the kit will be returned to Surfrider, incurring another postal trip and additional costs at Surfrider's expense.

## CONTACT THE COUNCIL WHERE YOUR EVENT IS BASED

Your Ocean Initiative will be rolled out on a public website. This is thus very important to engage with the relevant organisation or appropriate authorities in charge of the area where you are holding your collection.

To help you with this, we have drafted a letter template to send to relevant local authorities. This document will provide them with information about the collection and also asks them for their support (e.g. provision of skips, gloves etc.). You'll find this draft in the the ['Useful Documents'](#) section at the end of this guide.

This process needs to be started as early as possible in order to ensure a collaborative relationship with the various municipal authorities and give your collection the best chance of success.

## INVITE THE LOCALS

We encourage you to invite local associations, businesses, shops, to participate in your collection ([refer FAQ section on the website](#)). They are likely to be able to add value to your operation, perhaps by bringing more people along, creating a fun atmosphere, providing logistical support, or offering in-kind donations etc.

## ADVERTISE

Don't forget to get the word out locally about your collection and invite everyone along. To help you with event promotion, [Surfrider provides you with the following](#):

- **Current campaign posters**, with a box for you to fill in the place and time of your Ocean Initiative
- **The Press Kit and the Press Releases**

- **Visual aids and banners** to put on your social networks (e.g. Twitter, Facebook and others)

These tools are all available for download on our [Ocean Initiatives website](#).

We suggest you contact local media outlets (press, TV, radio), especially those who tend to support this type of initiative.

For any other questions about communication and promotion of your collection, please contact us via our contact form with 'Media' as your message subject.



## DEVELOP YOUR PARTICIPANT LIST (ONLINE)

Once you've got your event registered online, you can complete your participant list and then communicate with them directly from '**My Account > My Collections > Participant List**'.

While you're doing this you can invite everyone to sign up to the website. The online list lets you communicate with everyone and inform them in real time of any last minute changes.

In order to be covered by Surfrider Foundation Europe's insurance, please remember all participants must give all information asked for (name, address, phone number, email address).

[Please consider printing out a participant list](#) and take it with you on the day of the collection so that you can capture the details of anyone who has not already registered.

### Photo/video consent.

If you have any participants under the age of 18, and if you are planning to take any photos/videos, don't forget to get their parents to fill in a consent form. You will find this document here or in the 'Useful Documents' section at the end of this guide: [DOWNLOAD THIS DOCUMENT](#).





# ORGANISE YOUR COLLECTION

## EVENT DAY

### WELCOME PARTICIPANTS

It's important to give participants a good welcome, and indicate clearly exactly where the collection will be carried out. To help with this you can use any of the communication tools (posters, visual aids, banners) from the Collection Kit or on the Ocean Initiatives website. We also recommend that you choose an easily identifiable and accessible meeting point.

### ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SIGN IN (HARD COPY)

As we've mentioned, it's very important to encourage everyone to put their names on sign-off sheets (online and/or on hard copy) as appropriate.

This will allow Surfrider not only to send a message of thanks to those who participate, but also to send them more information on the topic of marine litter and suggest other opportunities for participation.

Once you've got all your participant names you can finalise the online participant list, adding in any names you've got on hard copy from the day itself. [DOWNLOAD THE DOCUMENT.](#)

To do this, go to the Ocean Initiatives website and follow '**My account > My Collections**'.

### Surfrider RC Insurance and the participant list (France and Spain)

Attention: Only people registered on the participant list will be covered by our Civil Responsibility cover. It is therefore important that their contact details are correctly captured.

### ANNOUNCE ANY SECURITY MEASURES

Announce security measures for the collection, using this summary sheet: [DOWNLOAD THE DOCUMENT.](#) You can print this out and put it up somewhere for people to refer to.

### DISTRIBUTE COLLECTION EQUIPMENT

The Ocean Initiatives publicity material is provided courtesy of the Surfrider Foundation Europe. In order to prevent waste, please make sure you distribute the material sparingly to participants and try to recoup any material that can be reused at the end of the collection (make use of the bags to collect materials and fill them.) Below are a couple of suggestions for handing out kit:

- Plastic bin bags: one bag for two participants
- Hessian bags: three bags per collection. You can split the participants into three groups and give out one bag per group
- Gloves: one pair of gloves for every two participants.

## COORDINATE LITTER COLLECTION

Before kicking off your collection, don't forget to explain what marine litter is, and explain what type of waste need to be collected. Please also ask participants not to collect things of organic origin (pieces of wood, or organic debris from high tide marks etc.) so as to protect the area's ecosystem.

According to the number of participants and the state of the beach (in terms of pollution), you could choose several different methods of litter collection, such as the following:

1. **Split up into groups** according to type of litter (e.g. plastic bottles, cigarette butts, polystyrene fragments etc.)
2. **Create groups assigned to collecting zones**
3. **Turn it into a competition**, creating teams.

Lastly, for an efficient litter collection, we recommend you start at the furthest point from the meeting point and work backwards, as this will minimise the distance your participants have to carry full rubbish bags.

## RAISE AWARENESS AMONG PARTICIPANTS

Once you have got back to your meeting point with your full rubbish bags, you'll be able to gather your participants around and engage with them around a discussion on the problem of marine litter.

We recommend you start by discussing the collection they've just carried out, and by asking some questions. You might ask them:

- **How did that go?**
- **Which type of waste did you collect the most of?**
- **Were you surprised by the quantity or diversity of waste that you collected?**
- **Name one unusual piece of rubbish you've found**

After you've talked about this, you could make the most of your audience's attention to present some other information or key concepts about the issue of marine litter.

In order for you to be able to do this comfortably, we have made a large amount of information on the topic of marine litter available to you. Below, you'll find a useful list of reference websites:

[Ocean Campus website](#)

[Surfrider website - marine litter part](#)

[Tutorial 1 - Educational sequence](#)

[Tutorial 2 - Marine litter](#)

[Educational material](#)

If you have any other questions, [please don't hesitate to contact us](#).

## FILL IN THE REPORT FORM

In terms of its work in scientific research, Surfrider needs your help to understand the big picture issue, and identify the nature and scale of this pollution in Europe and across the world.

In 2015, Surfrider became associated with the European Environment Agency to share the data collected as a result of our Ocean Initiatives. We would ask you therefore to fill in information about the quantity of certain types of litter that you have collected, as well as other general information about the area of your collection on the report form (simple or intermediary). [You can preview the report form to see what you'll need to fill in prior to your collection](#). You can also print it out and have it with you on the day of your collection so that you can fill it out on the spot.

You can keep coming back to your report form at any time, and you can fill it in directly from your online account. If you're interested in going further with participative science, Surfrider is pleased to offer the possibility of being part of a larger monitoring operation on a European scale thanks to the [Marine Litter Watch App](#). If you'd like more information about the report form and the Ocean Initiatives participative science approach, [you can refer to the FAQ page of our website](#) and/or get in touch [with the online contact form](#). For queries relating to this, please choose 'Environment' as the subject of your message.

## THANK PARTICIPANTS

Before parting ways, don't forget to thank all your participants and to emphasise the importance of their contribution to the success of your Ocean Initiatives collection. Their support has made your Ocean Initiative possible!

## TAKE A GROUP PHOTO

Take a group photo after the collection. Photos showing collections can be used in our communications documents, and their presence online reflect your engagement. You can also post any of your photos of the collection on Instagram or Twitter using: [#oceaninitiatives](#).

## DISPOSE OF THE LITTER YOU'VE COLLECTED

It's now time for rubbish that you have collected to leave the natural environment and join the treatment process. Depending on the agreements you've made with the waste disposal company or relevant municipal authorities, you have the choice of:

1. **Take the rubbish** to the tip or to the closest sorting facility
2. **Drop the rubbish** to a convenient location for the waste disposal company, making sure that its collection has been confirmed
3. **Dispose of the rubbish** in the skips or containers made available to you by the waste disposal company.

Regardless, ensure that your waste is not disposed of on the streets, roadsides or beside public / private rubbish bins (this will only increase the risk of your rubbish returning to the natural environment).

If you have more rubbish than you have bins or skips, we recommend you take any surplus rubbish bags with you so that you can dispose of them in a more appropriate place. Just bear in mind that you are responsible for the rubbish at the end of the collection.





## MANAGEMENT OF RUBBISH

There are several options based on the type of litter found and its state of degradation.

**With regards to glass fragments:** glass containers (bottles, pots, jars and flasks) can be recycled as long as they're not full of sediment. You can put these to one side during the collection, in a dedicated bag, and then dispose of them in a glass recycling bin.

**With aluminium cans,** these can also be recycled as long as they're in a reasonable condition (i.e. if they don't look like they've spent years outside and haven't rusted). You can also put these in their own bag and dispose of them at the nearest recycling point.

**Plastic packaging** (e.g. drinks bottles made of clear PET plastic) is usually collected and sorted in your local area: if you find any plastic waste that appears to have been left recently (e.g. dropped on the beach, at the side of a lake or river bank) and has not degraded, you can keep these separate and dispose of them at your nearest recycling point after your collection.

**Plastic packaging** tends to undergo degradation from the sun's UV rays, as well as from wave action and salt water. The sun is plastic's worst enemy, as it attacks and breaks their polymer chains. Plastics that remain for a long time in the environment, exposed to the sun or in the marine environment, become brittle. It's these degraded plastics that then further fragment into progressively smaller pieces to become microplastics.

Currently there are enterprises investigating the possibility of capturing certain types of plastics (e.g. PET bottles, PEHD/HDPE plastics, polystyrene, nylon, fishing nets) with a view to recycling or reusing them. The waste stream for plastics originating from the ocean is still in its early stages and research remains marginal. To find out if there is a recycling point near you or if there are any other options (e.g. upcycling, art projects) that could make use of your litter, please contact us at [oceaninitiatives@surfri-der.eu](mailto:oceaninitiatives@surfri-der.eu).

While recycling plastic from the oceans is technically possible, it would significantly reduce its material value, and it would be necessary to somehow render them all compatible with each other. Treatment of these wastes requires a lot of energy (including collection, transport and processing) as well as water for washing them. The environmental and financial cost of doing this at the moment is higher than using virgin plastics.

**Do not forget that the best sort of waste is the one we don't produce.**

During the collection, it's possible that you might find waste that is potentially harmful or infectious (syringes, full medicinal jars or bottles etc.). We recommend you find out how these types of waste are usually treated by your local council, it is best to be careful with this sort of waste, and to never dispose of it in regular bin bags.

# ORGANISE YOUR COLLECTION



## AFTER THE EVENT

### CLOSE OUT YOUR EVENT

In the week after your collection, you'll receive an email reminding you of what's left to do to close out your event. Including:

- [Fill in the report form](#)
- [Post your photos](#) to the Ocean Initiatives website, and social media
- [Add any participants](#) who put their names on the hard copy sign on sheet on to the online participant list on your account. This will maximise the chances of getting these participants to come to any future operations.

### INFORM SURFRIDER OF ANY MEDIA RELEASES

Don't forget to collect any media releases related to your event and send them to us at

**[oceaninitiatives@surfrider.eu](mailto:oceaninitiatives@surfrider.eu)** with the subject 'Media Releases: NAME & DATE OF YOUR COLLECTION' or by courier to **Surfrider Foundation Europe, 33 allée du Moura, 64200 Biarritz, FRANCE**

#### [Some details to mention in your correspondence.](#)

For press or media releases, don't forget to tell us which publication it is from, as well as the date of the release. Please always include your name and contact details at the bottom of your correspondence so that we can get in touch with you.



# THE ORGANISER'S CHECKLIST



## **BEFORE, DURING, AFTER**

### **BEFORE**

- ✓ Register your collection on the website
- ✓ Wait for your collection kit to arrive
- ✓ Contact your local council
- ✓ Invite the locals
- ✓ Advertise
- ✓ Start filling in the online participant list

### **DURING**

- ✓ Welcome participants
- ✓ Request that people sign on to the hard copy participant list if they haven't done so online
- ✓ Read out security measures
- ✓ Distribute equipment
- ✓ Coordinate the litter collection
- ✓ Raise awareness
- ✓ Fill in the report form
- ✓ Thank participants
- ✓ Take a group photo
- ✓ Dispose of rubbish

### **AFTER**

- ✓ Close out your event
- ✓ Send copies of any media or press releases to Surfrider



# USEFUL DOCUMENTS

*There's no need to print the following documents, but checking them out online will help you to prepare well for your event*

## COUNCIL LETTER TEMPLATE

To send to the local council relevant to your collection at least 30 days prior to your event.

[DOWNLOAD THE DOCUMENT.](#)

## PARTICIPANT SIGN ON SHEET

This document is very important because it allows us to insure participants in the event of an accident, even if they are not registered online prior to the event. We recommend you download and print.

[DOWNLOAD THE DOCUMENT.](#)

## EXAMPLE AGENDA FOR AN OCEAN INITIATIVE

This document sets out the common stages of an Ocean Initiative and may help you plan your event.

[DOWNLOAD THE DOCUMENT.](#)

## SURFRIDER EUROPE'S ECO-EVENT DOCUMENT

Information about how to reduce any event's impact on the environment.

[DOWNLOAD THE DOCUMENT.](#)

## SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS (BEACHES, LAKES OR RIVERS)

[DOWNLOAD THE DOCUMENT.](#)

## REPORT FORM / MARINE LITTER WATCH APPLICATION

Quantifying tools are to be printed (paper form) or downloaded (app) for the collection day. You will then be able to complete the form online in the '[My Account](#)' [section](#).

[SIMPLIFIED VERSION](#)

[INTERMEDIARY VERSION](#)

[MARINE LITTER WATCH](#)

## IMAGE CONSENT FORMS

This document allows us to publish photos or videos in which there may be minors. It is very important to return this to us.

[DOWNLOAD THE DOCUMENT.](#)

# ANY OTHER QUESTIONS

**For any other questions, or for more information, please try the following:**

**1. Have a look at our FAQ** page online where you'll find answers to a number of frequently asked questions and other useful information about your event. [HAVE A LOOK AT OUR FAQ](#).

**2. Contact us** using the online contact form on our website. [CONTACT US](#).

**3. Approach your nearest voluntary Surfrider**; you can find their details here. [CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE](#).

The team at Ocean Initiatives and Surfrider Foundation Europe wish to thank you once again for your engagement with Ocean Initiatives.

## OCEAN INITIATIVES

The programme is aimed at the reduction of marine litter at its source. Thanks to local collections of marine litter on river banks, lakes, beaches and on the seafloor, the campaign is targeting a citizen evolution through education. Data on litter gathered during these collections facilitates knowledge of the state of our oceans, and further enables the development and adaptation of the European regulatory framework.

[www.oceaninitiatives.org/](http://www.oceaninitiatives.org/)

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