



# OKLAHOMA TRASH-OFF IDEA SHEET

**For TRASH-OFF information or free promotional posters and trash bags (limited supply) for participants only, contact the ODOT Beautification Office, (405)521-4037.**

(April is such a “weather challenging” time of year; you may want to set an alternate cleanup event date if necessary.)

TRASH-OFF provides many valuable hours of volunteer labor to make Oklahoma communities and highways clean and beautiful. Suspending fees normally charged for landfill access will encourage participation. As you plan your group’s TRASH-OFF activities, here are some fun ideas and suggestions.

## ACTIVITIES:

- Cities and counties can provide bottled water and/or host **appreciation picnics, barbecues, etc.**, at parks, community centers, or in town squares after the cleanup. Live entertainment featuring local artists, drawings and door prizes donated by local merchants, or a **Trash Talent Show** could help entice more participants!
- Be creative with **trophies!** In the past, the ODOT Beautification Office has presented awards made from hub caps.
- Meet before your cleanup event for **breakfast and safety training.** (*Think Safety First!*)
- Recruit a local veterinarian to explain the hazardous **effects of litter on wildlife, livestock, and household pets.**
- Ask a church or day care center to **provide child care** on TRASH-OFF day.
- Plan your **TRASH-OFF** with another cause-oriented day, such as **National Youth Service Day** or **Green Day.**
- Feature a **Trash Band** at your awards ceremony with instruments made of roadside litter. Have a **Talent Contest** with local drama, dance, music students or dance bands performing short, original anti-litter skits or songs.
- Plan your **TRASH-OFF** cleanup to **coincide with a citywide event**, such as a heritage day or festival, and hold a **competition between businesses** for most trash picked up in downtown areas. Sponsor a **chili cook-off, ice cream or gumbo contest**, or have a **Potluck Picnic** when cleaning park areas!
- Smaller cleanup groups can meet at someone’s home for an **outdoor barbecue, potluck dinner**, or have a “**Trash Elephant**” **gift exchange** with safe items found during the cleanup.
- Coordinate a “**free-dump day**” at landfills, or curbside pick-up, or supervised brush burning to collect trash that might otherwise land on roadsides or in parks.
- **Build a “sculpture”** or “**trashmobile**” from safe objects found during TRASH-OFF. (Tires, car parts, tools, etc.)
- Have a “**Trash Derby**” with go-carts made of discarded boxes and wheels; design the best “**Trash Tree Swing**” from old tires; play **Horseshoes** or **Ring Toss** with (clean) toilet seats - depending on whether U shaped or round; or schedule a school “**Locker Cleanout**” (this will draw youth interest in the main community cleanup).
- Include Earth Day or **nature-oriented activities**, such as a nature path enhancement, putting up bird houses or planting trees and flowers.
- Have a **Trash Parade!** Use pickup trucks, dump trucks, trailers, or other vehicles to parade the collected trash through town. You could also use larger items to create a parade float. Be sure to publicize the parade so it can be enjoyed by the entire community. Who knows, maybe your Trash Band could lead the parade!
- **Local restaurants or grocers** may provide food and beverages for your group before or after the TRASH-OFF event in appreciation for beautifying around their businesses.
- **Letters of Commendation** could be written and presented to any individual, special group, or organization who participates and/or contributes in special ways during TRASH-OFF.

## PUBLICITY:

- **Local newspapers and radio stations are priceless**, so let them know your TRASH-OFF plans and ask them to run daily Public Service Announcements (PSA's). The ODOT Beautification Office will provide extra copies of the TRASH-OFF press releases if needed. Be sure to suggest photo opportunities to media sources.
- This is a great time to "ham it up" to get **local recognition** for your event or group. A **"(Your Event/Group) Day" proclamation** from the mayor, or a **highly visible "thank you" banner** posted at a local business, will draw attention and hopefully, more participation in TRASH-OFF events.
- Wearing group **T-shirts** will **promote** TRASH-OFF, **distinguish** participants, and **encourage** others not to litter! To use the **"Oklahoma, Keep Our Land Grand"** logo, contact the ODOT Beautification Office for artwork.
- Encourage **local leaders** to promote your cleanup day event(s), including sheriffs, police chiefs, judges, mayors, etc. Local college or high school sports teams, music groups, churches, PTA's, neighborhood associations, community groups, and even farmers and ranchers should be encouraged to join in.

## CONTESTS:

- **"Jail and Bail"** contests are where community leaders are jailed until they get bailed out by full bags of trash supplied by their friends. (Portable cardboard or wood jails work just fine.)
- Give a donated prize to the person who finds the **most unusual item(s)**. *Be sure to report this on your TRASH-OFF Evaluation Report form and return it to the ODOT Beautification Office.* **As an added incentive, be advised that your cleanup group could win a statewide TRASH-OFF award!**
- Give prizes for the **oldest/youngest participants**, the individual or group that cleans the **largest area**, or the group with the **most participation**.
- Give a ticket for every filled bag of trash turned in and hold a **drawing for prizes** at the end of the TRASH-OFF. Prizes can be items donated by businesses, such as movie rentals, gift certificates, merchandise, etc.
- Teachers can give **bonus points** to students for **civic/community service** or hold competitions between classes for **Most Litter** collected.
- *Please encourage local students to enter each year's **ODOT Trash Poster Contest** that is held throughout Oklahoma's school system, **Grades K-12**, coordinated by the ODOT Beautification Office and the Department of Environmental Quality. The annual Trash Poster Contest begins in December and ends on a February 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for poster submissions. **Twelve posters are selected** and included in **50,000 copies** of the next year's **Trash Poster Calendar**, distributed statewide to schools, businesses, libraries, city-county-state government offices, and Oklahoma citizens. **Hundreds of poster ideas can originate from TRASH-OFF locations, events, and results!***
- **Hide special prizes**, such as an I.O.U. to be redeemed for a \$10 bill in a plastic Easter egg, or a gift certificate sealed in a plastic bag or pop bottle, before the cleanup begins. Let groups know so they will look for prizes.
- Hold contests of any kind for fun! Think about **Cow Patty Tosses, Trash Olympics, a Trash Circus**, whatever!

These are suggestions and ideas the ODOT Beautification Office has collected over the years. Be sure to **share your ideas** by reporting them when you **complete & return** your **Evaluation Report** form! Good luck with all cleanup efforts!

**BE SAFE!**

\*

**HAVE FUN!**

\*

**THANK YOU!**

Melody D. Johnson, ODOT Beautification Coordinator  
ODOT Beautification Office - 200 N. E. 21<sup>st</sup> Street - Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
Phone: (405) 521-4037 Fax: (405) 522-1634  
Email: [beauty@odot.org](mailto:beauty@odot.org) Website: <http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/beauty>