

CITY OF PORT COQUITLAM



ADOPT • A • SPOT

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK





Street·Park·Trail



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A photograph of a person walking a dog on a dirt trail through a dense forest. The person is seen from behind, wearing a dark t-shirt and shorts. The dog is a dark-colored breed, possibly a Labrador, and is walking ahead of the person. The forest is lush with green trees and foliage, creating a serene and natural environment.

Welcome to the **Adopt-a-SPOT** program

The City of Port Coquitlam takes pride in its natural environment. Surrounded by rivers and connected by trails, Port Coquitlam boasts more than 50 public parks and an extensive network of trails and bike lanes, including the 25 km Traboulay PoCo Trail that surrounds the City.

Port Coquitlam's natural spaces are an important part of its identity and provide the public with a number of benefits including promoting physical activity, social interaction, connection with the natural environment, tourism and recreational programming, and a natural habitat for many species of local plant and animal life.

The City of Port Coquitlam's Adopt-a-Street, Park or Trail (SPOT) Program was developed to support residents in playing an active role in helping to keep the City's streets, parks and trails clean, natural and safe for all members of the community.

By joining the Adopt-a-SPOT program, you are joining a community of individuals, families, school groups, businesses and community groups working together to make a difference in our community and environment.

This Volunteer Handbook is designed to provide you with the basic information needed to volunteer with us. Please read it carefully, but don't hesitate to ask staff any questions it doesn't answer.

Thank you for helping to keep Port Coquitlam clean, green and beautiful for the whole community.

For more information regarding the **Adopt-a-SPOT Program**, please contact:

ROB LOXTERKAMP Adopt-a-SPOT Program Supervisor | Recreation Specialist, Volunteer Services & Neighborhood Development
Email: spot@portcoquitlam.ca | Tel: **604 927 7953** | Fax: **604 927 7910**

What's involved?

Adopt-a-SPOT volunteers are responsible for visiting their adopted area at least once per month and completing the following duties:

- Picking up and disposing of garbage and recycling in the nearest appropriate City bin.
- Reporting any hazards to public safety, such as sharp objects, missing or damaged public infrastructure, sink holes, loose tree branches or fallen trees to the City.
- Notifying the City about graffiti, illegal dumping, or other issues impacting the cleanliness of public spaces.
- Logging activity, including date and length of visit, number of participants, and any other observations of note.



Who can join?

The Adopt-a-SPOT, Park or Trail Program is open to all types of volunteers and groups, including:



Individuals



Families



Schools



Businesses



**Community or
Service Organizations**

All groups must provide a group representative responsible for acting as a primary contact and keeping the City informed of the group's activity and any issues in their area.

How do I get started?

If you or a group are interested in becoming involved in the Adopt-a-SPOT Program, the following steps need to be completed:

1. Application Form

Submit important information such as contact information, area(s) of interest, emergency contacts, medical information and relevant previous experience.

2. Program Orientation

All individual volunteers or group representatives must attend an intake interview and program orientation before joining the Adopt-a-SPOT Program. During the interview, staff will confirm the information provided on your application form, ask you further questions to ensure a good fit with your area of interest, review safe participation guidelines, answer any questions you may have and may provide information on additional volunteer opportunities.

3. Statement of Commitment

Volunteers are required to sign a Statement of Commitment and Acknowledgement of Risk confirming that they understand the City's expectations for their participation in the Adopt-a-SPOT Program and what they can expect from the City in return. Volunteers under the age of 19 must also provide the written consent of a parent or guardian.

4. Criminal Record Check

After a successful intake interview, all individual volunteers or group representatives must complete a Criminal Record Search Request Form and return their results to the City's Human Resources Department. If at any point the City determines an applicant does not meet the necessary requirements, the City may refer them to other opportunities or decline their application.

Recognition

Adopt-a-SPOT Volunteers will be recognized for their efforts with the posting of a minimum of one sign in the area of the street, park or trail they have adopted.

Signs will be posted no sooner than one month into an adoption term on the condition that activity reports are being sent in. All active Adopt-a-SPOT volunteers will also have their adopted area(s) posted on the City's Adopt-a-SPOT Map on the City of Port Coquitlam website. Recognition signs will be removed upon resignation or dismissal from the program.

Individual volunteers or designated group representatives for volunteer groups may also be invited to participate in other volunteer recognition opportunities as part of their participation in the City of Port Coquitlam's volunteer program.



Staying connected

Because Adopt-a-SPOT volunteers perform their duties independently, submitting reports is essential to staying connected with staff and notifying the City of any issues in need of attention in your adopted area.

If you are temporarily unable to participate in the program due to health or family changes, extended travel or seasonal restrictions to group participation, please connect with Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff to notify them about the length of your absence and when you expect to be able to resume your duties.

Staff will send out a monthly Adopt-a-SPOT Update newsletter to all volunteers. This newsletter is intended to help staff stay connected with volunteers, and provides a place to welcome new members, celebrate birthdays and anniversaries and share any news and events that may be of interest. Staff may also reach out by phone or e-mail to notify volunteers of other time-sensitive news, such as severe weather warnings, construction impacting their adopted area, wildlife sightings or other opportunities for community involvement such as invasive species removals.

While Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff will attempt to reach out and send reminders to volunteers who are not reporting activity, failure to report activity without prior notification for a period of three months or more may lead to dismissal from the Adopt-a-SPOT Program and removal of recognition signs.

Safe participation guidelines

Any person under the age of 19 must have parent permission to participate.

Perform clean-ups in groups of two or more. If adopting an area as an individual, bring a friend or family member with you while performing duties.

Report any injuries or accidents to Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff as soon as possible.

Maintain phone access. Have a cell phone with you in case of emergency.

Be visible and identifiable. Wear the gloves and safety vest provided, as well as suitable footwear and weather-appropriate clothing.

Keep hydrated, especially during hot weather.

Never reach for obscured objects with your hands. Safely identify suspicious objects using tongs.

Do not use motorized vehicles on trails or parks.

Avoid cutting or damaging any trees, shrubs or plant material.

Do not traverse trails and parks during storms or periods of high winds.

Do not enter or attempt to clean creeks or rivers, even to collect litter.

Do not pick up exceptionally heavy or unyielding objects.

Stay on one side of the street. Avoid crossing back and forth except at marked crosswalks, and do not block streets.

Handling sharps

Sharps refers to syringes, needles, broken glass or any other sharp object that may be contaminated with HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis B or C with the potential to infect by puncture or cut.

Volunteers are never required to deal directly with sharps or any other objects that might pose an immediate safety risk. Please report all sharps encounters to Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff as soon as possible and describe in detail the nature and location of the sharps to arrange for safe disposal.

If the sharps could pose an immediate safety risk to the public or you are unable to reach

Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff, please also contact the **City of Port Coquitlam Public Works Department** at **604 927 5496** or the **Emergency After Hours** line at **604 543 6700** as soon as possible and provide the information required for City staff to follow up.

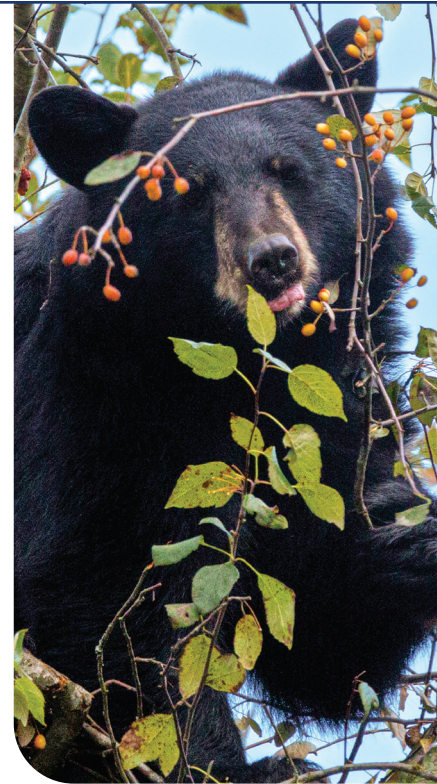
Other potentially contaminated items, including bloody or soiled cloth materials, medications, or condoms, should be discarded with regular trash but handled using appropriate personal protective equipment (gloves and tongs) and following safe handling procedures.

Domestic animal and bear encounters

If you encounter issues related to domestic animals, including stray or aggressive dogs or consistent issues with pet owners not disposing of excrement, please connect with Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff.

If you see a bear that is going about its regular bear business such as walking through your yard, trails, or open park spaces, don't panic; leave it alone and do not cut off its escape path. It is normal for bears to roam through urban areas, especially as development encroaches on wild space. Report the sighting to the **Provincial Conservation Officer Service 24 hotline** at **1 877 952 RAPP** or report it on-line at **rapp.bc.ca**.

If you encounter a bear feasting on residential garbage or a bear that is acting threatening or aggressive call the **Provincial Conservation Officer Service 24hr hotline** at **1 877 952 RAPP** or report it on-line at **rapp.bc.ca**. Dispatchers can provide advice for sightings when public safety is not threatened and a Conservation officer may be dispatched depending on the circumstances. For more information on bears, including what to do you if you encounter one, please visit the *Bear Safety* webpage at **portcoquitlam.ca/bears**.



Reporting injuries

If any participant in an Adopt-a-SPOT clean-up injures themselves during their duties, please notify Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff as soon as possible. Program staff will assist in the completion of a first aid report and will provide guidance on appropriate first aid and follow-up.

The City has insurance coverage in the event of injury and/or property damages arising out of the activities of the program. For further information about this insurance coverage, please contact Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff.

Reporting activity

All individual volunteers or designated group representatives for volunteer groups are asked to report their volunteer activity using the “Hours” feature on MyVolunteerPage.

Alternative methods of reporting activity may be accommodated upon request.

All Activity Reports should include the following information:

- The date of the clean-up
- The amount of time spent (hours and minutes)
- The number of participants
- Any minor issues or other details of note encountered during the clean-up

Any issues that could pose an immediate safety risk to the public should be reported directly to Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff.

Reporting hazards and other issues in need of immediate attention

If you encounter:

- Damage to public benches, tables or park equipment
- Illegal dumping
- Weapons or illegal substances
- Dangerous or fallen trees
- Erosion/sink holes
- Other situations which you feel could pose an immediate safety risk to the public

Contact **Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff** at **604 927 7953** or **spot@portcoquitlam.ca** as soon as possible to describe in detail the nature and location of the hazard. If you are able, send photos of the issue and its location using your smart phone to **spot@portcoquitlam.ca**. This will be a huge assistance to City staff in finding and dealing with the issue in a timely fashion.

If you are unable to reach the Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff, please contact the **City of Port Coquitlam Public Works Department** at **604 927 5496** or the **Emergency After Hours line** at **604 543 6700**.

Obtaining supplies

The City of Port Coquitlam agrees to provide any clean-up supplies required by an Adopt-a-SPOT group. This includes an initial supply of safety vests, reusable and disposable gloves, litter pickers, buckets and garbage bags.

Groups in areas where sharps have been reported as an ongoing issue may also be supplied with sharps kits along with the training to use them safely.

If you should run out of any given supply, please contact Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff. We will prepare the supplies that you need and can arrange a time for you to come and pick them up. Pick-up can be done at **City Hall** or at the **Gathering Place, #200 – 2253 Leigh Square Place.**

Statement of commitment

The Adopt-a-SPOT Program is a partnership between the citizens, businesses and groups who wish to contribute their time in keeping the parks, trails and streets clean and safe in Port Coquitlam.

Both the City and the individuals or groups adopting these areas commit to each other to perform certain duties to help the appearance of their community.

It is understood that at no time is the safety of any volunteer to be placed in jeopardy in the performance of their duties.

The Adopter agrees to:

- Perform the agreed upon duties along a specified street, park or section of trail.
- Report all volunteer activity in the adopted area and report any hazards or other issues in need of immediate attention to Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff in a timely manner.
- For groups of two or more, designate a group representative who will ensure that all participants are responsible people, and that all minors under the age of 19 are provided with adult supervision. The group representative will act as primary contact for the group and will review safe participation guidelines with participants and ensure that the appropriate tools and equipment are used.
- Deal with any hazardous material in a proper manner, following the safe participation and handling sharps guidelines outlined in the Adopt-a-SPOT Volunteer Handbook. Inform Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff of any items in need of immediate attention.
- Report any injury incurred by any participant during cleanup activities to Adopt-a-SPOT Program staff. The injury should be reported within two working days of the incident and include: the name of the injured person, the time and date of the incident, the nature of the injury, details of the incident and the name of any hospital or clinic attended.

The City agrees to:

- Provide clean-up supplies required for safe participation, including disposable and work gloves, garbage bags, litter pickers, safety vests, buckets and, upon request, graffiti removal wipes or sharps disposals kits.
- Make arrangements for free removal and disposal of litter from the nearest City trash can.
- Formally recognize volunteer efforts.
- Provide a contact person from the City to answer questions and address concerns.

Assumption of risk

Please Read Carefully. *By signing this document, you waive certain rights including the right to sue.*

To: *The City of Port Coquitlam, its Officers, Employees, Directors and Volunteers, ("The Releasers")*

Assumption of Risk

I am aware that engaging in any Adopt-a-SPOT Program activity may involve certain risks, dangers and hazards including but not limited to contact with dangerous debris and collision with passing traffic.

I agree to wear a safety vest and gloves while participating to minimize any such risks and I freely accept and fully understand and assume all risks and dangers.

Release of Liability

I agree to waive any and all claims against the Releasers and to release the Releasers from any and all liability for any loss, damage, injury or expense that I may suffer as a result of participating in the Program. However, I understand that this waiver does not preclude one from making a claim under the City's Volunteer Insurance Policy.

I have read and understood this Release prior to signing it. I am aware that by signing this release, I am waiving certain rights that my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators and assigns may otherwise have against the Releasers.

I have read and understood this Statement of Commitment and Assumption of Risk and agree to the terms of participation.

Street, Park or Trail to be Adopted

Name to be Printed on Recognition Material

Group Representative Name

Signature

Date

Adopt-a-SPOT Supervisor Name

Signature

Date

If the volunteer is under age 19, a parent/guardian must sign below.

Parent/Guardian Name

Signature

Date



