**Volunteer Supplies**

**What is it?**
Volunteer supplies are all the supplies needed to keep volunteers safe and healthy, including food and beverages. Similar to the Materials Selection section, the first priority is to reduce the total amount of supplies purchased. Decide what is truly needed for the project, and only purchase supplies for the number of volunteers expected. Consider borrowing supplies, such as food service equipment (trays, plates, silverware, coffee urns, etc.) and tools. Another option is to rent supplies. Ask volunteers to bring their own supplies if appropriate (i.e., work gloves, their own water bottles, tools) and provide incentives to volunteers who do bring their own supplies.

Before any project begins, the Project Manager must consider what supplies are needed to keep volunteers healthy and safe. Health and safety gear may include gloves, hard hats, safety glasses, masks/respirators, extra sunscreen, and insect repellent. Some safety gear, such as hard hats, may be borrowed from local construction companies or other groups. Sunscreen and insect repellent should be made from natural ingredients, if possible.

**Why is it important?**
Reducing the amount of volunteer supplies purchased is another opportunity to reduce the project’s environmental impact. In addition, ensuring volunteers are safe, well fed, and hydrated is critically important to the success of the project.

**Who is involved?**
Supplies may be purchased by any member of the project team, but decisions are usually made by the project manager.
### Best Practice: Use existing resources for volunteer supplies

**Tool:** Borrow supplies when possible

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<tr>
<td>Find project partners and other community groups that may have the supplies you need. Borrow them for the project; clean and return them when done.</td>
<td>Use whenever possible. This option will always reduce costs and reduce the amount of materials that need to be purchased.</td>
<td>Examples include a local school that has dishes and serving utensils for food and beverages, or a local construction company that could lend tools and safety gear.</td>
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**Templates and Checklists**
- None

**Tool:** Encourage volunteers to bring their own supplies (food, tools, etc.)

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<td>Encouraging your volunteers to supply their own materials and food.</td>
<td>For projects in which the volunteer base is known and reliable, and communication with volunteers before the project is comprehensive.</td>
<td>Communicate with volunteers before the project and ask them to bring their own supplies. Possibly provide incentives for volunteers who bring their own supplies.</td>
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**Templates and Checklists**
- Volunteer Supplies Sustainable Checklist

### Best Practice: Find ways to reduce project’s waste

**Tool:** Reduce waste

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| Find ways to reduce the amount of supplies or materials purchased for the event. | On all eco-friendly service projects | Purchase supplies in bulk to reduce packaging. Also, use reusable supplies instead of disposable supplies. Consider having one water bottle per person that can be filled from a large water cooler. 

Another option is to choose food that is not pre-packaged, and to serve food cafeteria style, using reusable dishware instead of disposable plates and serving ware. Using compostable (i.e., plant-based) serving ware is also a good option if composting is available at the site. |

**Templates and Checklists**
- Volunteer Supplies Sustainable Checklist
- Evaporation Station Outline
Volunteer Supplies Sustainable Checklist

Note: The amount of waste that may be reduced by following these practices varies, since each project will have different conditions and a different baseline. In some institutions, removing trays from cafeteria lines has reduced food waste by 30 percent, as consumers take less food and become more aware of what they are eating.¹

Food:

- If you provide food, serve food buffet-style instead of serving individually packaged meals.
- If possible, use reusable dishware and silverware.
- If disposable items are used, consider paper plates and cups instead of Styrofoam.
- If food is leftover, consider donating to a food bank or compost.² Most food banks limit the food that can be donated. Most food recovery programs only accept unserved food that can be safely transported and reused.
- Consider food options that result in less waste, as opposed to individual lunch boxes. For example, pizza will feed a large crowd of people for less waste.
- Have a potluck meal or prepare food on site.
- If composting is an option, place compost collection containers next to trash and recycling can with clear signage explaining how to properly sort compostables, recycling, and trash.

Water:

- Provide water in large jugs or through water filtration systems instead of single-serving plastic bottles.
- If you do purchase water bottles, have volunteers write their names on the bottles for reuse and provide recycling bins for plastic bottles.

Tools:

- Borrow tools from local construction companies, or see if your community has a Tool Bank. Make sure you leave some tools behind for ongoing maintenance of the project. Paint the handles a bright color to discourage tools from walking away.
- Provide respirators for those working on dusty projects or with tools that create a high amount of dust to sustain the health of your volunteers. Volunteers should also have access to other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like hard hats, gloves, safety glasses, and ear plugs.

² Studies show that Americans waste an estimated 27% of food available for consumption. See the following article: Martin, Andrew. “One Country’s Table Scraps, Another Country’s Meal.” The New York Times, May 18, 2008. Accessible from: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/18/weekinreview/18martin.html
Background Information

Wet concrete and wet paint are both hazardous materials. The following procedures will help protect volunteers and support an eco-friendly project.

Concrete:
Washing wet concrete out of containers and onto the ground kills grass and contaminates groundwater. Solid concrete, on the other hand, is containable and reusable—as aggregate in anything from more concrete to driveways to bedding walkways or retaining walls.

Paint:
Paint is similar to concrete; when dry, it’s waste but non-hazardous. Paint should never be dumped onto the ground or down sewer drains. Leftover paint can be donated to another entity or be saved for the next project. Solid paint, on the other hand, can be disposed of in a regular trash can.

How to Build a Hazmat Evaporation Wash Station

Every Project Manager should have a Hazmat Evaporation Wash Station or a similar container for hazardous materials like paint and wet concrete. This will prevent these hazardous materials from being disposed of in ways that are harmful to the environment and to the people living in the area, and will also encourage reuse.

If you designate an area for cleaning out wheelbarrows, hoes, and paintbrushes, volunteers will be more likely to taking good care of tools that are lent for the project, and also allows for purchased materials like paintbrushes, paint trays, and rollers to be reused after the project.

If your project is on a slope and all the water runs in one direction then you only need 2 barriers. Barriers can be lumber or sandbags or concrete blocks: anything that will stop water from running away. Put down visqueen or a tarp that you can leave in the area for a few days. This will collect the run-off from washing brushes, rollers, and other supplies.
**Step 1: Build the Concrete Cleanout Frame**
Build a square out of 8-inch 2x12s, attaching them with 3 screws at each corner connection.

**Step 2: Attach the Tarp**
Line the box with a large tarp (or visqueen), making sure that the tarp comes up on all four sides. Screw the tarp into the wood (using grommets if the tarp has them) to keep the tarp from slipping down.

**Step 3: Communication**
Make a sign or arrange for an announcement on Build Day to let volunteers know they should use this wash station to get concrete off their tools throughout the day. Also communicate that paint tools should be cleaned using a separate station instead of trashed.

**Step 4: Use**
Concrete:
Wash all hoes and shovels and wheelbarrows into the tarp (being careful not to rip it or pull it down). Use as little water as necessary, and then wait a couple of days for the water to evaporate. Finally, come back and break the dry concrete into small pieces, and either give it away for reuse or throw it in the trash.

Paint:
Wash all your paint brushes, rollers, and roller trays using a series of buckets with a few gallons of water in each one, starting each tool in a “lots of paint” bucket and continuing through to a “basically clean water” bucket. When finished with all washing, dump all buckets into the one big trash can. Over time, the paint solids will settle to the bottom of the container: give the paint a day to settle, then pour clean water off the top and expose the paint solids at the bottom. Then give it another day to dry out and dispose of your solid paint in the trash.

**Evaporation Station Tips**
- If you have a lot of concrete to wash out, use visqueen, which is much lighter and cheaper than a tarp and comes in bigger pieces.
- Pay attention to the amount of water or materials used to clean supplies to avoid wasting water and creating more wash water to evaporate.
- Leave the sludge alone for a few days (longer in warm wet weather) so it can dry out and then take care of it. Identify a point person to come back and properly dispose of the waste and disassemble the tarp and wood.
- Plan to put a temporary fence around the area until the station is taken down.
- Pieces of dry concrete are reusable for making other aggregates. Check with local facilities to see if anyone can use it.
- Create separate evaporation stations for paint and concrete: they need to be taken care of separately and on different timelines.
## Atlanta ToolBank

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<tr>
<th>Benchmark:</th>
<th>Volunteer Supplies, Reuse/Recycling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Type:</td>
<td>Material Sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization:</td>
<td>Atlanta ToolBank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Location:</td>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Summary:
The Atlanta Community ToolBank provides a tool lending service and all associated functions for local non-profit agencies.

1. Makes tools and equipment available to local agencies so they don’t have to purchase these supplies.
2. Stores and makes available salvaged materials to be reused in future builds. This reduces waste and supports eco-friendly projects.

### Tools Used:
1. Over 140 distinct tool types are available for borrowing, including power tools, ladders, and safety gear.
2. Gathers reusable supplies for future projects, including building materials, cleaning supplies, hardware, and paint.

### Project Impact:
By gathering and sharing resources, the Atlanta Community ToolBank supports community efforts in strengthening neighborhoods by providing borrowed tools and recycled supplies to local volunteer-based community projects. Typical supply items include building materials, cleaning supplies, hardware, and paint. The Atlanta ToolBank’s eco-friendly program is built on the premise of inclusion, and encourages individuals to participate in community efforts in their local neighborhoods. Borrowing tools and recycling left-over materials helps to reduce waste during a project and instills the value of eco-friendly project management in the volunteers.
Resources

• Determine where your food comes from: [www.foodroutes.org](http://www.foodroutes.org)
  o This site gives suggestions for food sources, as well describing how to determine where your food came from.

  o Food bank search via zip code.

  o Information about sustainability issues related to bottled water.

• Tool Bank USA: [www.ToolBank.org](http://www.ToolBank.org)
  o The ToolBank lends tools of all kinds for use in volunteer projects, facility maintenance and improvement projects, community improvement events, and special events.

• Web sites discussing methods to reduce food waste:
  o BeSmart: [http://www.besmart.org/festival/foodwaste.html](http://www.besmart.org/festival/foodwaste.html)
  o Festival vendor tips on waste education: [http://www.besmart.org/festival/vendortips.html](http://www.besmart.org/festival/vendortips.html)