

Kent County Parks Department Volunteer Services: Safety Guidelines

For your safety, please follow these guidelines while performing tasks at any park:

Do:

- Dress appropriately for the weather.
- Wear insect repellent, sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat for protection depending on need.
- Wear boots or **closed-toed shoes, long pants and work gloves** at all times – no sandals!
- Take or carry with you any personal medications, including treatments for asthma or allergies that may be triggered by working outdoors.
- Use all tools safely and appropriately. Rakes, shovels etc. should be carried below shoulder level and always pointed down to prevent injuries.
- Obey all Park Rules and Regulations and stay within designated cleanup boundaries.
- Work only during park hours and work with a partner whenever possible.
- It is always a good idea to carry a small first aid kit.
- Bring bottled water with you or have water available near work site, and keep hydrated!
- Lift all objects with your legs, not your back.
- Supervise children at all times.
- Be cautious of bees and other insects as well as poison ivy, poison oak and other irritants! Be aware of surroundings and watch for wildlife. Michigan's only venomous snake, the Eastern Massasauga, may be present in some County Parks.
- Tie garbage bags tightly and either put in available container or leave in a safe place.
- Wash your hands thoroughly when finished with project.
- Handle sharp objects with care – children should NOT pick up broken glass.
- Make sure all volunteers in your group are familiar with these safety guidelines.
- Provide a group leader cell number to all group volunteers.
- Contact Parks Department staff at (616) 632-PARK (7275) immediately if you notice a safety hazard. **For concerns needing emergency attention call 911.**

Don't:

- Don't overexert yourself. Take breaks and drink liquids to stay hydrated.
- Don't bring small children along on projects unless they can be closely supervised.
- Don't bring pets along on projects.
- Don't leave children or pets in the car at work locations.
- Don't stomp on bags. Injuries may occur from broken glass or sharp objects.
- Don't enter the river environment, including creek banks, without prior permission from Parks Department staff.
- Do not work in the streets. Use caution and wear reflective safety vests when working near streets and traffic areas.
- Don't trespass on private property.
- Do not apply any pesticide, herbicide, or other chemicals without prior permission from Parks Department staff.
- **Under no circumstances should you pick up any materials you suspect may be hazardous.** Please alert the group leader and others in the area immediately. Call Kent County Parks Department staff at (616) 632-PARK (7275) and give the precise location of the material. **Concerns needing emergency attention call 911.**
- DO NOT PICK UP: Hypodermic needles, medical waste, latex items, dead animals, or chemical containers or any other items that may pose a hazard.

Stay Safe and Have Fun!