

Chicago River Day Safety Points

Ahead of time:

- If you have not already scouted your site, do so before the event. Please notify Friends' office if you notice any hazardous or questionable conditions.
- Advise volunteers to wear long pants and close-toed shoes. Also advise them to protect themselves from the sun. Wear hats and sunscreen, and bring drinking water.

On the day of the event:

- In case of a medical emergency, the first thing you should do is make sure there is no immediate danger to yourself or any other volunteer. Then **CALL 911**. Make sure you give them all the information they need – they should always hang up first. **Once help has been secured, call Cynthia on her cell phone at (773) 320-7762.**

The safety talk to give to your volunteers:

- Introduce yourself and any other site captains.
- Make sure you have collected waivers from all volunteers.
- Let everyone know where the first aid kit is located. If there are bathrooms at your site, make sure everyone knows where they are.
- **Anything in a barrel, can bag, jug or box that appears to be of industrial, agricultural, medical or unidentifiable origin should be considered hazardous waste. If you find any containers that you can't identify, DON'T TOUCH THEM. Mark their location and report them to Friends' staff.**
- Advise your group not to touch hypodermic needles, razors or other sharp medical waste. Have them contact you if they find medical waste, so that you can dispose of the waste properly. Needles, razors and other sharp waste should be disposed of in a "sharps container" or other hard container, such as a coffee can or water bottle. **This waste must be kept separate from other debris. Do not pick up needles or other sharp medical waste with your bare hands.** Use a pair of tongs or other hard barrier. If you do not feel comfortable removing this type of waste, or do not feel that you can remove it safely, note its location and notify Friends' staff. If you do find and remove this waste, keep it separate from other debris. This waste should be given to Friends' staff after the cleanup for proper disposal.
- Remind your group about poison ivy – it likes to grow near water. It has three leaves on a leaflet, and the leaflets are alternate. It can grow up around a tree as a vine, and it can look like a small shrub. In the summer, the leaves are green. Because it's early in the season, the leaves are often reddish, and many plants may be growing together, only a few inches tall. The plant does not always look the same. If you're not sure, don't touch it – "Leaves of three, let it be!"
- Advise your group not to lift extremely heavy objects, and to lift properly when they do remove something. (Lift with your legs, not with your back.)
- Avoid any area that seems dangerous, including steep banks. The safety of your volunteers always comes first, and that may mean leaving some debris on the banks.
- Make sure volunteers work in pairs. No one should work alone!