

Frequently Asked Questions About Delaware's Adopt-A-Highway Program

What is the Adopt-A-Highway Program?

Delaware's Adopt-A-Highway Program is a partnership between the Department of Transportation and volunteers. We work together to clean up Delaware's roadsides, two miles at a time. More than just a cleanup campaign, this program works to educate citizens of all ages about the responsibilities of land stewardship.

Why should I adopt a road?

You should adopt a road to make your state and local community better. By participating in AAH, you can make at least one road cleaner, better looking, and healthier for everyone. Your sign will remind motorists not to litter, and will create a more secure environment for animals and plant life.

Who can participate?

Any local community organization, such as civic, social or school groups, is eligible to participate, as are individuals 18 years or older. Participants must have an approved application on file with the Department of Transportation.

Group members under 15 years of age must be supervised by an adult 18 years or older. Individuals under 12 years of age will not be permitted to participate.

How long is our participation/commitment for?

Participants will be required to adopt a road for two years. As long as DelDOT has the required three activity reports on file for the previous year, and the group is in good standing, ongoing participation is granted.

Can I adopt a particular road, or does DelDOT choose the road?

You are welcome to have a particular road in mind when initially contacting DelDOT. However, if the road is unavailable, we will work with you to provide a suitable road nearby. Eligible roads are selected by DelDOT based on availability. Downtown city streets, subdivision streets and the interstate system are ineligible for adoption.

What wording is allowed on my sign, and how many signs will be posted?

You decide on the wording for your signs. The signs should reflect the name of the group, individuals or business that is conducting the cleanups. It can be 28 characters included spaces and punctuation. Logos, symbols or website addresses are not permitted on AAH signs. Two signs will be posted, one at each end of the two-mile stretch.

How do I sign up to volunteer for Adopt A Highway?

You may obtain an application on-line at www.deldot.gov (click on Community Programs and Services and then on the Adopt-A-Highway page), complete and return it to the Department of Transportation, Adopt-A-Highway Program Coordinator, P.O. Box 778, Dover, DE 19903. Or, you can call (in Delaware) 1-800-652-5600 or 302-760-2080, provide your address, and we will mail an application packet to you.

Is there a fee for participating in AAH?

There is no fee to participate, however please understand that when you join the program, you are making a commitment. Due to the cost of producing and putting up the signs, we ask that you consider staying in the program for a minimum of two years.

How many times a year do I need to clean the road?

Both sides of your two-mile section of highway should be cleaned at least three times per year. You are welcome to conduct more cleanups if it is necessary or desired. Litter pickup in the median is prohibited.

How do I let DelDOT know I want to do a clean up, and what happens next?

Please contact your local AAH district coordinator and inform them when you'd like to do your cleanup. Please provide at least one week's notice, and allow enough time for someone from your group to pick up the necessary supplies (bags, vests, etc.).

How do I get supplies to conduct my cleanup?

Upon being informed of your scheduled cleanup, DelDOT will supply participants with safety information, plastic trash bags, safety vests and "Crews Working" signs. Rubber gloves are also available upon request. These materials should be picked up from the DelDOT district maintenance office during working hours one week before the cleanup.

What do I do with the trash I collect?

Filled trash bags may be left under your AAH sign. The contact person for the group should notify DelDOT on the next business day to let us know that the trash needs to be picked up.

You are welcome to dispose of the trash with your personal trash, but you will not be reimbursed for any personal disposal services.

Participants are encouraged to separate and recycle appropriate materials for their benefit and to further help the environment. However, it is not a requirement of the program. If participants recycle the trash, they are entitled to keep the money for their group or personal benefit.

Do groups have to recycle?

Recycling trash is not mandatory. Participants are encouraged to separate and recycle appropriate materials for their benefit and to further help the environment. However, it is not a requirement of the program. If participants recycle the trash, they are entitled to keep the money for their group or personal benefit.

How do I stay safe while doing my clean up?

The following are some tips that may be helpful with your cleanup:

DON'T pick up litter on the highway, close to the edge of the road or on the median.

DON'T pick up litter in construction or maintenance sites, in tunnels, or on bridges or overpass. DelDOT will maintain these areas.

DON'T do anything that will distract passing drivers or other volunteers.

DON'T work during peak travel times. DelDOT can help you identify suitable hours.

DON'T work during participate in litter pickups while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

DON'T allow children under the age of twelve to participate.

DON'T pick up materials that appear to be hazardous. Contact the Delaware State Police or the Hazardous Waste section of DNREC at 302-739-4781.

DO stay on the right-of-way, facing traffic, with your team. Work on only one side of the road at a time.

DO work in small groups, keeping children with adults at all times.

DO carpool to the site and park off-road, as far from the pavement as possible.

DO wear bright colored, protective clothing, gloves and hard-soled shoes. Put on your orange safety vest before leaving your vehicle.

DO work only during daylight hours and in fair weather.

Do avoid animals and/or noxious weeds.

How do I get credit for my cleanup?

You will receive credit for your cleanup under our program when you submit an Activity Report following your cleanup.

What is an Activity Report?

Groups are required to submit three activity reports per year during the course of the Adopt-A-Highway participation. One report must be completed after each cleanup and should include information such as the number of participants, hours spent cleaning the road, and the amount of litter collected. ***Failure to submit the requisite reports can result in dismissal from the program.***

Where can I get an Activity Report?

An activity report form is provided upon application approval with your welcome letter. Activity report forms can also be found online on the Adopt-A-Highway page of DelDOT's website. They can also be picked up at our Administration Building in Dover on Route 113 or at any of our district offices.

How can I submit my Activity Report?

Activity reports can be submitted online through the Adopt-A-Highway page of the DelDOT website (www.deldot.gov). They can also be submitted to any one of the Adopt-A-Highway district coordinators at the district office, or by mailing to the

Department of Transportation, Adopt-A-Highway Program, P.O. Box 778, Dover, DE 19903.

What is the history of Delaware's AAH Program?

In its early years (1970-1980s), Delaware's AAH Program was called the Pitch-In Program, and it encouraged motorists to pitch their trash in designated barrels along Delaware's major routes.

As a more formal program evolved, Delaware looked to the successful "Don't Mess With Texas" anti-litter campaign, initiated by the Texas Department of Transportation in 1985. Delaware's AAH Program started on April 25, 1990.

Today the program boasts 800+ volunteers and we continue to make Delaware a better place to live and visit..... two miles at a time.