

NEW HAVEN PARKS VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP GUIDELINES



All Hands for New Haven Parks

New Haven Parks Department must lead the way when it comes to the upkeep, maintenance, and activation of our parks.

We also need your help. Parks are a shared responsibility, and we need active participation from the public and partner organizations to be successful.

We need to do everything we can to show that care for our parks is a community-wide effort.

We need to expand engagement opportunities for the public. Even small every day actions have big impacts in our parks.

We need to leverage the capacity of our partners to bring creativity and the capacity to do more with our parks.

Volunteers are crucial to this effort and we thank you for giving your time and energy to improving our parks.

Volunteers who follow the rules here are understood to be participating in a City sponsored program.

“Our vision is to foster a culture of public stewardship and collaboration to create a vibrant park system that is open and accessible for all.”

Urban Resources Initiative Community Greenspace Partnership

We partner with URI to:

- Manage volunteer sign ups
- Promote volunteer opportunities
- Provide material support
- Technical advice
- Training
- Project oversight



URI has rules in addition to the Park's Department's volunteer rules.

Participants in URI programs are expected to follow URI's rules.

Parks Department Contacts

- Max Webster, Director of Parks
 - mwebster@newhavenct.gov, 475-331-8546
 - Work plans, approvals, rules
- Stephen Hladun, Deputy Director of Planning and Operations
 - shladun@newhavenct.gov, 203-627-4899
 - Work plans, funding
- Zack Moreau, Deputy Director of Operations
 - zmoreau@newhavenct.gov, 203-921-8857
 - Workday coordination, operational support, safety
- Jackie Gaudio, Outdoor Adventure Coordinator
 - jgaudio@newhavenct.gov, 475-331-9407
 - Ranger program support, educational programs, community engagement
- Hershey Hatton, Administrative Assistant
 - hhatten@newhavenct.gov, 203-946-6954
 - Permits

What we expect from you

- Work well with others
- Act in a professional manner
- Safety first
- Leave no trace
- Work within an approved scope
- Communicate and provide feedback
- Be an ambassador for the parks

Volunteer waiver

- For general volunteer activities, no additional waiver is required for the Parks
- Other project partners may have their own waivers for volunteers to sign
- Project work must be approved by the Department
- The guidelines established in this document must be followed at all times

Site Captain

Every volunteer workday should have a Site Captain.

Site captains oversee the activities for the day and bridge the gap between Parks Department staff and volunteers to ensure that work is completed safely.

Site Captains communicate expectations between Parks staff and volunteers.

This role may be the responsibility of one person or a couple. It can remain with one person all the time or it can rotate. That said, the person acting in the site captain role should understand their responsibilities and identify themselves to the group at the beginning of each workday.

Working with children

- When youth work groups (schools, New Haven Promise, etc.) join a workday and parents or guardians are not present, then a staff member (teacher, crew leader, program leader, etc.) who has received a background check from the sponsoring program must be present at all times.
- For general workdays, a parent or an adult guardian must be present at all times with any minor (under the age of 18). Children are not permitted to join workdays on their own without a staff member or volunteer who has a background check if parents are not present.
- Volunteers who have not received a background check are never permitted to work alone with minors.
- Volunteers and staff cannot be 1:1 with a minor at any time, even those with a background check.
- Minors are not permitted to work on their own.

What's in our toolbox?

Tools for Sawing

- Pruning saw
- Bow saw

Tools for Grubbing

- Pulaski
- Grubbers
- McLeods
- CombiTools
- Picks
- Mattocks

Tools for Cutting

- Hand clippers
- Loppers
- Hand pruners
- Grass whip

Tools for Digging & Tamping

- Shovels
- Tampers
- Hand weeders

Tools for Pounding

- Hammers

Tools for Lifting & Hauling

- Pry bar/Rock bar
- Wheelbarrows
- Tarps
- Buckets
- Weed wrench

Tools for Grabbing

- Trash pickers

Power Equipment

- Single-hand held and operated equipment

What's not in our toolbox?

- Fire
- Slashing and chopping tools
- Chainsaws and heavy power equipment
- Chemical herbicides
- Vehicle operations

**All require additional training, waivers, certification, and/or Parks Department oversight. Approval is needed before any of the options above can be pursued in the Parks.*

Required PPE

For all stewardship work

- Long pants
- Close-toed shoes
- Gloves

When using tools above your head

- Safety goggles
- Helmet

Recommended PPE

- Long sleeves
- Hat
- Bug spray
- Sunscreen
- Bandana

Volunteers are encouraged to take any additional precautions and use additional layers of PPE at all times to keep themselves safe

First Aid

Site Captains should always have a first aid kit on the job site.

First aid kit should also include:

- A water jug
- Tecnu/poison ivy soap

Safety Talk

Every workday should begin with a safety talk. A safety talk should include:

- Overview of the project work for the day
 - Tasks, boundaries, goals
- PPE & Tool Safety
 - Check everyone has appropriate PPE
 - Tool training and review safe tool use
- Identify Hazards/Risks
 - Public interaction, safe lifting, hydration, uneven ground, poison ivy, ticks, etc.
- Emergency Procedures
 - Location of first aid kit, identify lead staff for communication and reporting

Volunteer Incident Report

Instructions: This form must be completed by the staff supervisor or Site Captain immediately following any rules violation, injury, illness, or significant "near-miss" involving a volunteer. Submit the completed form to the Department Office within 24 hours of the incident.

1. General Information

- **Volunteer Name:** _____
- **Contact Information:** _____
- **Date of Incident:** ____ / ____ / 20__ **Time of Incident:** _____ AM/PM
- **Park/Location:** _____
- **Specific Site Area:** _____
- **First Aid Required:** _____ **Ambulance Required:** _____ **Police Required:** _____ (If so, please record the police report number)

2. Description of Incident: Describe what happened in detail: (Include the rules violation or what the volunteer was doing, tools being used, and any environmental factors like slippery slopes or weather).

3. Supervisor Analysis & Prevention

- **Were hazards identified before the workday?** Yes No
- **Was the volunteer wearing required PPE?** Yes No
- **Was a safety talk conducted prior to work?** Yes No

4. Signature

- **Staff/Site Captain Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____ **Print Name:** _____

Ticks!

- Frequent tick checks are encouraged throughout the workday
- A tick bite is an injury that should be reported on the incident form. Those who find ticks after the workday are encouraged to still report those tick bites.
- Deer ticks must be attached to a person for at least 24 hours before it can transmit the bacteria that causes Lyme. That said, if a tick can be removed safely on site, it should be done so as soon as possible.

 TickEncounter

Blacklegged Tick or Deer Tick (*Ixodes scapularis*)



Larva



Nymph



Adult Male



Adult Female

Prohibited Practices

- Working alone, volunteer workdays should never be done solo
- Removing trees greater than 2 in DBH (*even invasive ones*)
- Girdling trees without approval (*even invasive ones*)
- Attaching or affixing ropes, cables, or other devices to trees
- Building or altering trail sections without approval
- Installing bridges, boardwalks, or benches without approval
- Tampering, harming, or molesting wildlife
- Removing or transplanting native plants
- Removing soil, rocks or stones
- Conducting unapproved plantings
- Removing encampments
- Picking up sharps or needles
- Attempting to enforce park rules

These rules are drawn from City Ordinance. In all of these cases, Parks Department approval and assistance is required. Contact the Parks Department for assistance or approval.

When is approval needed?

- When contracts, agreements, or long-term commitments from the Parks may be involved
- A prohibited practice is thought to be needed
- Adding or installing new features (trails, benches, etc.)
- Working in new areas
- Any new plantings in new areas
- Use of specialized equipment or practices
- Parks Department staff capacity requested
- Project work that costs more than \$50,000 needs to be approved by the Parks Commission in addition to the Director.

Corrective Action

Like every park visitor, volunteers agree to follow all the rules and regulations of the Parks.

You are not authorized to enforce the rules and regulations of the Parks but will notify Parks staff if any issues are identified.

Failure to follow workday directions, performing duties outside the scope of the volunteer role or violation of Park rules, regulations, or policies can result in corrective action.

If there are serious concerns with your work as a volunteer, Parks staff will work with you to correct them. Serious violations though may result in the suspension or dismissal of volunteers.

If you believe that there is a serious issue that needs correction, please contact Parks Department staff immediately.

For immediate safety concerns where there is an immediate threat or risk to volunteers or the public because of misbehavior, please call 911

Volunteers who do not follow the rules are understood to be no longer participating in a City sponsored program.