Delaware Department of Transportation

Adopt-A-Highway • FAQ

What is the Adopt-A-Highway Program?

The Delaware Department of Transportation's Adopt-A-Highway Program (AAH) 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, the AAH program works to educate citizens of all ages about the responsibilities of land stewardship and brings the community together to help keep Delaware litter free. Participants have the option of turning any trash collected into cash through recycling.

The AAH Program allows volunteers to adopt a road or segment of road owned by the State of Delaware. Participants agree to care for their designated road or segment of road at least three times a year. After each clean-up, groups are responsible for completing an activity report and submitting online, via e-mail or by mail. DelDOT provides safety vests, trash bags, gloves and "Trail Clean-up in Process" signs. In addition, we will create and install one sign along the middle of the adopted bike path or portion of path indicating the group's involvement in the program in recognition their efforts.

Each time a group is seen cleaning up a segment of road, it is our hope it will remind the public that there is an ongoing need to keep our environment, specifically roadways, walkways, and bikeways cleaner. DelDOT believes in fostering a working relationship with walkers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and anyone who is interested in helping us keep these areas well maintained and keep our state beautiful for all to enjoy. Hopefully, it will deter others from littering as well.

Why should an individual, group or organization 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 area of the state cleaner, better looking, and healthier for everyone. Your sign will remind motorists not to litter, and that your group cares about the safety of those who use the bike path.

How much does it cost to Adopt-A-Highway?

The AAH Program is free for all interested in volunteering and offers a way for individuals, companies, businesses, civic groups and other organizations to help visually improve their community, save taxpayer dollars, and keep our roads litter free to enjoy all while generating positive publicity for your group.

Who can Adopt-A-Highway?

Individuals, businesses, community organizations, schools and all other organizations in the community are encouraged to participate. Participants must have approved applications on file prior to conducting first clean-up. 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 do we apply for the Adopt-A-Highway Program?

You can apply online at DelDOT.gov or print out application, complete and e-mail to AABP Coordinator at dotpublic@delaware.gov or mail to:

Department of Transportation
Adopt-A-Bike Path Program
PO Box 778

Dover, DE 19903

Can we adopt more than one road?

When available, groups may adopt more than one road or segment of road.

Can we adopt a specific road or segment of road?

It is best to have a particular road in mind when you apply. DelDOT will confirm if the road is indeed state owned and/or maintained and if it is eligible for adoption. 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. Roads must be at least two miles minimum to be included in the AAH Program.

How long is the Adopt-A-Highway program?

Adopting a road is a big commitment. Participants in the Adopt-A-Highway Program agree to adopt one state-owned road or segment of road at least two miles in length for a minimum period of two years and agree to complete three cleanups/activity reports per year. 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.

Is there any recognition for individuals, businesses or organizations participating in the Adopt-A-Highway Program?

In exchange for participation in the AABP program, each group will receive two Adopt-A-Highway signs. The one sign will be posted at one end of the sponsored two-mile stretch and the other sign will be posted at the other. The organization/business name will be a maximum of 28 characters in length, including spacing and punctuation. Logos, symbols, or website addresses are not permitted on AAH signs. Where possible, signs may be co-posted with other existing signs.

Are there any age restrictions for volunteers participating in the Adopt-A-Bike Path Program?

Group members younger than 15 years old must be supervised by adults 18 years or older. Individuals under 12 years old are not permitted to participate. There will be at least one adult per eight underage members (12 to 18 years of age.) Large groups should stay together as they clean the path.

Do members of our group need to fill out any type of waiver?

Yes, adult volunteers need to complete a waiver prior to each clean-up. A parental guardian will need to complete a waiver for any child 15-18 years of age. The waivers can be found under the forms tab.

Is there a limitation on how many times a year we can clean up our road or segment of road?

Litter pick up must be done on both sides of the assigned road or segment of road at least three times per year, more if necessary or desired. Each group agrees to complete and submit at least three clean-up activity reports per year to the AAH Coordinator.

How to we submit an activity report?

Activity reports can be submitted online, printed, completed, and e-mailed to AAH Coordinator at dotpublic@delaware.gov or by mail to:

Department of Transportation
Adopt-A-Highway Program
PO Box 778
Dover, DE 19903

How do we get supplies needed for cleanup?

Groups must contact AAH Coordinator at least one week prior to litter pick-up. AAH Coordinator will arrange for groups to pick-up safety vest, trash bags and "Crews Working" signs. Gloves are also available upon request. These materials should be picked up by you (or a member of your group) at the DelDOT District Maintenance Office during working hours one week before the cleanup.

What do we do with the trash we 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 bag(s) 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. If applicable, 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 we stay safe during the cleanup?

We have compiled a list of best practices. Please make sure everyone in your group reviews them prior to cleanup. The Safety Tips document is under the forms tab on this website.

What if we must reschedule our clean-up?

Cleanups during bad weather or when visibility is reduced or restricted is prohibited. The adopting group will be responsible for rescheduling.

Who do we contact if we discover an issue during our cleanup?

Please contact AABP Coordinator with any specific questions or concerns regarding bike path conditions in your area.

How do we renew our sponsorship?

Groups are responsible for notifying the AAH Coordinator of any changes in the status of their application. If group completes three cleanups per year and completes three activity reports per year for two years, their sponsorship will automatically renew. DelDOT reserves the right to terminate participation if we are unable to contact you and/or we do not receive at least three activity reports per year from group. DelDOT reserves the right to revise these conditions as needed and deny any applications from unqualified volunteers.

What is the history of DelDOT's Adopt-A-Highway 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 help keep Delaware litter free two miles at a time.