Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the South Portland Parks and Recreation Department! Volunteers like you make a big difference in the community and we want you to have a fun and SAFE volunteer experience with us. To meet these goals, please read the following information so that you are prepared to deal with some of the potential hazards of working outside.

**Ticks**
Ticks are found throughout Maine and certain species have the potential to carry and transmit disease to humans. The greatest risk in Maine of contracting Lyme disease from ticks is in June and July, but this can extend into the spring and fall if there is a mild winter. It takes approximately 5-6 hours for a tick to become firmly attached and up to 10 days for it to fill with up with blood.

To protect yourself from ticks:
- Learn to identify the different species of ticks, especially deer ticks which most commonly transmit Lyme disease
- Wear light-colored clothing
- Wear pants and tuck them into socks
- Use tick repellents on skin (20-30% DEET) or clothing (permethrin)
- Carry a tick spoon or key to remove attached ticks
- Do a thorough tick check after working outside

Read more: [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/gotpests/bugs/ticks.htm](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/gotpests/bugs/ticks.htm)

**Sharps**
Many volunteer events involve the clearing of litter and debris from parks and trails. While performing these tasks, volunteers may encounter discarded hypodermic syringes, which carry the risk of exposure to HIV, Hepatitis B or C, Tetanus, and other diseases. Extreme care should be taken when handling these objects.

To protect yourself from needles:
- ALWAYS wear gloves
- If you see a syringe, clear the area with a rake or picker until it is clearly visible
- Carefully pick up the syringe from the middle using pliers or tongs with a gloved hand
- Dispose of the needle by placing it sharp end first into the provided labeled container

Read more: [https://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/biomedical/documents/SharpsBrochure.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/biomedical/documents/SharpsBrochure.pdf)

**Poisonous Plants**
Certain plants, such as poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac, may cause allergic reactions (typically an irritating rash) in susceptible individuals. Remember: leaves of 3, let them be!

To protect yourself from poisonous plants:
- Learn to identify poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac
- Wear pants, long sleeved shirts, and close-toed shoes when outside
- Wear gloves if handling brush or other vegetation
- If you come into contact with these plants, wash the area with soap and cold water

Working in the Heat

Without the proper precautions, working in extreme heat can lead to serious health problems including heat cramps, dehydration, heat rash, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

To protect yourself while working in the heat:
- Drink plenty of water or other fluids \textit{(at least} once an hour, better if every 15 minutes)
- Take breaks frequently in a shady or cool space
- Wear light-colored and loose fitting clothing to reflect heat and allow air movement
- Wear a hat and sunscreen
- Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of various heat related illnesses to protect yourself and others

Read more: \url{https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress/index.html}

Hand Tool Safety

When doing trail work, hand tools can be a tremendous help. While using hand tools it is important to be aware of your surroundings at all times. Although they generally pose less of a risk than power tools, certain precautions should still be taken to ensure a safe experience for all.

To protect yourself while using hand tools:
- ALWAYS wear long pants, sturdy boots, and work gloves
- Eye protection and hard hats are strongly recommended
- Use ear protection when crushing, hammering, or using power tools
- Carefully inspect tools before and after using them
- Carry tools with blades forward and sharp ends down, not over the shoulder

Read more: \url{https://www.maine.gov/beh/Safety/GenRules/hand_safety.htm}

On the day of your volunteer event, your leader(s) will go over more specific safety information for the area you will be working in. Please do your part by showing up to the event prepared with:
- Long pants
- Sturdy boots
- Work gloves
- Plenty of water
- Bug spray and sunscreen
- Extra layers of clothing

Thank you for volunteering with the South Portland Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department!