

Litter



What is litter?

The cigarette butts, soda cans, water or drink bottles, coffee cups, plastic bags, gum, candy and food wrappers, boxes, paper, uneaten food and various other items you may see along a road, street, in a field or stream or blown up against a fence or swirling around an empty lot are all litter.

A person throwing things from a car, dropping things on the ground or if even throwing trash at a garbage can, missing and leaving it are all actions of littering.

Problems caused by litter?

When litter is on sidewalks or along curbs, it may get washed down into storm drains when it rains. This rain water then leads to the nearest river or ocean. If the water becomes polluted from litter, we can no longer use it for drinking or recreation and neither can the other living organisms, plants and animals, that rely on it. Animals may also mistake litter floating in the water as food and the litter could choke, suffocate, entrap, harm or even kill them.

Litter can be very dirty. Not only does it not look nice but it may carry germs. Some animals may be attracted to areas with lots of litter. They may find food among the trash and pick up germs that make them sick or make them carriers of diseases that may make other animals and even humans sick.

Litter is bad for the environment. It wastes and harms our natural resources. It can harm living things including us. It spoils the natural beauty of a place.

What can you do?

- Properly dispose of your garbage in a trash can or trash container.
- Recycle all that can be recycled. Reuse items. Or donate unused items that are still of use instead of throwing them out, placing them in the proper donation bins. Reduce, reuse, recycle!
- If you see a friend or family member throwing something on the ground, politely ask them to hold onto it until it can be put in a trash can, instead of throwing it on the ground.
- If you see a piece of litter, pick it up and throw it in a trash container. **Remember**, never touch anything that you do not know what it is, or anything sharp, oily or powdery or anything that may be a hazardous material. If you are unsure ask an adult you trust such as a parent or teacher before you touch anything.
- Wear gloves and/or use a grabber to pick up trash. Help organize or participate in a clean-up of your street, neighborhood or town.
- Check your yard, curb and roadway regularly (daily or several times a week) and pick up any trash there. Keep your property and surrounding area clean of litter. Always wash your hands well afterwards.