

"LITTER" KNOWN FACTS

What is litter?

Litter is the most visible sign of pollution. It is anything that is left where it is not meant to be. Litter is unsightly and dangerous. It can cause injury to people and wildlife. It encourages pest animals as well as the spread of germs and disease.

Why do people litter?

People who litter feel no sense of ownership or pride for their community. They believe someone else will remove it or they are too lazy to dispose of the item(s) properly. When a site is already littered, those who litter feel adding to it is "no big deal."

How does litter impact our environment?

Litter may not be the most dramatic of the many problems that threaten the quality of our environment, but it is a problem that affects everyone in our community. Litter creates ugliness in public places including streets, parks and waterways and impacts real estate values. Litter can kill aquatic life and decrease oxygen levels when it decays in water. Most litter can be recycled, which not only protects the environment, it saves our natural resources.

Are cigarette butts really litter?

There is much misinformation about cigarette butt litter...including the myth that cigarette filters are biodegradable. Fact: the acetate filters take many years to decompose. Wind and rain carry cigarettes into the water supply, where the toxic chemicals the filter was designed to trap leak out into aquatic ecosystems, threatening water quality and marine life. Cigarette butts may seem small, but with several trillion butts littered every year they are the number one source of litter in the county. For more, go to www.cigarettelitter.org.