

What Is Litter?

Litter is misplaced waste and trash. This visible form of pollution can disrupt wildlife, natural ecosystems, human health and safety, and communities.

Where & Why Does Litter Originate?

- Individuals are the primary source of litter
- Motorists and pedestrians contribute a combined nearly 70% of litter
- Most littering behavior occurs on purpose
- A strong contributor to littering is the prevalence of existing litter
- Most littering occurs at a considerable distance from a receptacle
- Individuals under 30 are more likely to litter than those who are older

How Does Litter Affect Our Community?

- Reduces aesthetic appeal and property values
- Can harm animals when they eat it or become entangled in it
- Costs billions of dollars to remove

What Can I Do?

- Educate others to prevent littering
- Clean it up - Littered environments attract more litter, so by decreasing the amount of litter we see we can decrease the probability of litter accumulating in that area
- Make it pretty - Communities that make an effort to “beautify” result in lower rates of littering behavior
- Make it easy - Provide sufficient trash, ash, and recycling receptacles
- Bring reusable items, instead of disposable, to picnics
- Dispose of waste properly in trash cans, recycling bins, or composting receptacles
- Discourage the release of helium balloons—they often return to ground and harm wildlife
- Cover truck beds—loose items can fly out and create litter

Most frequently littered items

	Cigarette butts
	Food remnants
	Food wrappers
	Food containers
	Beverage containers (cans)
	Napkins
	Paper, including straw wrappers

Source: Keep America Beautiful, Litter Research, 2015

Top 10 Items Collected

	Cigarette Butts 2,248,065
	Food Wrappers (Candy, chips, etc.) 1,376,133
	Beverage Bottles (Plastic) 988,965
	Bottle Caps (Plastic) 811,871
	Straws, Stirrers 519,911
	Other Plastic Bags 489,968
	Grocery Bags (Plastic) 485,204
	Beverage Bottles (Glass) 396,121
	Beverage Cans 382,608
	Cups & Plates (Plastic) 376,479

Source: Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Cleanup, 2015