

CIGARETTE LITTER FACTS

IS A CIGARETTE BUTT LITTER?

When it ends up on the ground and not in a receptacle, a cigarette butt is litter. Partially smoked cigarettes, matches, disposable lighters, packaging, and cigarette butts are all part of a growing national litter problem.

Individuals, who would never litter beverage cans or paper packaging, typically don't consider tossing cigarette butts on the ground as littering. Lack of awareness, lack of ash receptacles, and ordinances that move smokers outdoors all increase cigarette butt littering.

CIGARETTE BUTT LITTER AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Although it's one of the smallest pieces of litter, communities report cigarette butts are the top item collected during local cleanups. All that litter has an impact on the places we live:

- **Creating blight.** Cigarette butt litter is unsightly. It accumulates in corners, gutters, and outside doorways and bus shelters. Litter in a business district, waterfront, on roadways and recreation areas, and other signs of disorder create a sense that no one cares about the community.
- **Harmful to waterways.** Littered cigarette butts are easily carried in storm water runoff through drainage systems and eventually to local streams, rivers, and waterways. Cigarette filters contain cellulose acetate; a form of plastic that does not biodegrade and can persist in the environment.
- **Costly to clean up.** Cigarette litter requires additional sidewalk and street sweeping, greenway and park maintenance, and storm water system upkeep. Retailers, property owners, and municipalities also bear the expense of cigarette litter cleanup at entrances, exits, and adjacent sidewalks and parking lots.

TIPS TO REDUCE CIGARETTE BUTT LITTER

Appropriate ash receptacles need to be available to smokers who have moved from buildings, businesses, bars and restaurants on to the sidewalks to smoke. Individuals who smoke must accept personal responsibility and choose not to litter.

Here's how everyone can help:

- **Carry a portable or pocket ashtray when smoking outside.** Encourage smokers to be aware of where their cigarette will be discarded when they light up. Whether smokers are outside public buildings, in parks, on beaches or city sidewalks, a little planning will reduce the number of butts that end up on the ground.
- **Use a receptacle to dispose of cigarette butts, packaging, and lighting material.**
Ash receptacles are needed at the places where people must stop smoking before they proceed. These are called "transition points." Ash receptacles at transition points remind smokers to properly dispose of cigarette butts.
- **Don't throw butts out car windows.**
Place cigarette butts in a car ashtray, a portable auto ashtray (which fits in the cup holder), or a container with a secure top like an empty bottle or snap-lid tin.
- **Be aware of local litter ordinances.**
Many communities have litter ordinances that include cigarette butt litter. These are enforceable and carry penalties.



For more information about cigarette butt litter, go to <http://preventcigarettelitter.org>