

## **LITTER...IT JUST ISN'T NATURAL.**

### *WHAT IS LITTER?*

- ❖ Litter is ugly.
- ❖ Litter lowers property values.
- ❖ Litter discourages tourism.
- ❖ Litter is dangerous. It causes fires, motor vehicle and personal accidents.
- ❖ Litter is expensive. Estimated cost to clean up litter in Virginia is \$25 MILLION annually.

### *Other Litter Tidbits*

- ❖ Litter travels by wind, water, traffic and animals and becomes trapped in ditches, fences and vacant lots. These areas then become mini-dumps and provide an open invitation for the deposit of more litter.
- ❖ Cleaning up litter sets a new and higher standard in the community. Most people are reluctant to litter in a clean place.
- ❖ The ugliness of neighborhood litter adversely affects everyone in a neighborhood by reducing property values. Conversely, a clean community can be beneficial to all citizens.
- ❖ Litter originates through the actions of people. Changing the actions and litter habits of a community's population is vital to long-term litter prevention and control.

### *WHY DO PEOPLE LITTER?*

- ❖ They feel no sense of ownership or responsibility to the property.
- ❖ They believe someone else will clean it up.
- ❖ Litter is already present.

### *WHERE DOES LITTER COME FROM?*

- ❖ Improperly handled household garbage
- ❖ Improperly handled commercial refuse
- ❖ Construction and demolition sites
- ❖ Loading and delivery areas
- ❖ Uncovered trucks
- ❖ Pedestrians
- ❖ Motorists

## *WHAT DOES LITTER DO TO YOU?*

We, as taxpayers and individuals, pay dearly for littering. Nationally, the cost of litter is \$2.5 billion a year. Taxpayer money that could be used for many other needs like schools, roadways, parks and reduced taxes.

Littering also harms the environment. Regardless of size, it pollutes our waterways, damages our landscapes and other private property, destroys our forests and injures thousands of animals and people each year. It is also a primary source of injury to young children and causes approximately 2,500 vehicular accidents each year.

Unfortunately, people who would never purposefully harm their community, animals or other people often do so by littering. And while these are the most obvious effects of littering, the greatest injury may be the message of acceptance and approval for the act.

Littering of any object, regardless of size, conveys an attitude that littering is acceptable behavior. ***It is not.***

## *WHAT HAPPENS TO LITTER?*

Have you ever wondered what happens to litter when it is discarded? Remember these rates of disintegration the next time you see litter.

Piece of paper	2-4 weeks
Candy Wrapper	1-3 months
Plastic Bag	10-20 years
Cigarette butt	12 years
Aluminum Can	200-500 years
Six-Pack Ring	450 years
Glass Bottle	1 Million years
Plastic Bottle	<u>NEVER</u>

## *WHAT CAN YOU DO?*

- Set an example for others by not littering.
- Use a litterbag inside your car, truck, boat, or bicycle.
- When out walking, hold onto trash until you reach a trash receptacle.
- When out walking, pick up smaller pieces of litter.
- Report illegal dumping activities.
- Recycle items whenever possible.

- Cover open loads on all trucks, vehicles, and trailers.
- If you own or manage a business, check dumpsters daily to see that top and side doors are closed. Don't overfill dumpsters.

*CAN YOU DO MORE?*

YES! GET INVOLVED!

**Join Adopt a Spot** – call 269-2872

Call the **litter hotline 269-2870** if you witness littering from a vehicle.

<http://www.nngov.com/public-works/sw/resources/aas>

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