
Litter is an unnecessary problem in a community. All it takes is a little effort to keep our streets and neighborhoods litter free. After all, litter not only threatens our environment but also our economy and, inevitably, our way of life.

From small items like cigarette butts to larger items, such as appliances and used tires, litter is an obvious problem in many areas and, unfortunately, if nothing is done to control it, it will only get worse.

The problem is not only aesthetic however. In addition to being an eyesore, litter reduces property values and takes away from the natural beauty of Southeast Texas that brings not only tourists, but also tourists dollars to our region. Excessive litter also leads to higher taxes as highway departments and other government agencies spend millions of dollars annually in an attempt to control its growth.

According to Keep America Beautiful®, there is also strong evidence that uncollected trash and other types of physical disorder, such as graffiti and abandoned vehicles make people feel unsafe and attract crime.

Beaumont can little afford to lose much needed tourists dollars or potential industries due to litter in our community. So, do your part by properly disposing of litter and participating in area cleanup drives so we can keep our streets safe and clean and avoid potentially serious future problems as a result of indiscriminate litter.

It can take up to 100 years for an aluminum can to decompose. Here are a few more commonly discarded items and how long it takes for each to decompose to non-recognizable form.

Orange Peel

Up to 6 months

Paper Container

2-5 months

Cotton Rag

1-5 months

Rope

3-14 months

Wool Sock

6-24 months

Plastic Bag

10-20 years

Plastic Coated Carton

5 years

Cigarette Butt

10-12 years

Leather Shoes

25-40 years

Glass Bottle

Undetermined

Styrofoam

Never

According to Keep America Beautiful®, people litter for three primary reasons:

- ◆ They feel no sense of ownership, eventhough areas such as parks, highways and lakes are public property.
- ◆ They believe someone else (a city or state maintenance worker) will pick up after them.
- ◆ Litter has already accumulated. People tend to litter where litter is already present.

What You Can Do

Never throw anything from a vehicle

Not only is it against the law to throw trash from a vehicle, but it also creates an eyesore and unnecessary work for government employees and volunteers. And, the trash often ends up in our creeks and streams where it can pose a threat to fish and other wildlife.

Always use a tarp to secure truck loads

Always secure loads when hauling items in the backs of trucks. Bag or cover items that may blow out and help to keep our streets and highways litter-free.

Maintain dumpsters and loading docks

If your business or neighborhood has a dumpster, keep the area around it clean and protect it from illegal use. If your business has a loading dock, require employees to use waste cans and dumpsters for discarded items and make it a point to monitor these areas on a routine bases.

Always use a wastebasket

Take the time to locate trash receptacles when outdoors. If you can't locate a convenient place to dispose of your trash, then dispose of it when you return home rather than discarding of it improperly.

Keep your household trash secure

Make sure your trash is in a tightly sealed container so it can't be scattered by weather or animals.

Maintain construction and demolition sites

Construction and demolition sites are a major source of pollution. They don't have to be. Clean, orderly worksites are safer than cluttered, disorderly worksites.

Participate in Operation "Clean Streets"

Operation "Clean Streets" is an adopt-a-street program, operated through the City of Beaumont's Clean Community Department, which allows groups, clubs and businesses to adopt city streets.



Marine Litter

Unfortunately, litter is not just a problem on land. It's also a serious problem in our area waterways that not only effects wildlife but also all who benefit from our abundant water resources..

And, for the tourist, the weekend angler or recreational sportsman, the beauty and mystique of our many scenic waterways is spoiled by unsightly litter.

But, with a little effort, we can reverse the effects of litter and save our natural resources for future generations to enjoy.

- ◆ Keep a supply of litterbags on board your boat and get in the habit of using them and making sure guests use them as well.
- ◆ Never discard tangled fishing line, six-pack rings and other items that not only contribute to litter but also pose a threat to birds and marine animals.
- ◆ Try re-stocking your tackle box before heading out rather than opening new tackle on the water. This will help to keep your boat uncluttered and also eliminate the temptation to dispose of your trash in an improper manner.
- ◆ Bring a trash bag with you when you head to the sandbar or riverfront just in case there's not a trash can nearby to dispose of your trash when the day is done.

For more information on Operation "Clean Streets" or other ways in which you may be able to assist in keeping the City of Beaumont litter-free, contact the Clean Community Department at (409) 840-4872.



CITY OF BEAUMONT STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

For more information, contact:
City of Beaumont
Public Works Department
(409) 880-3725

Litter

*A Guide to Preventing Litter and
its Impact on Our Environment*

