

# Guide to a Litter-Free Butler County



## Information on Littering and What You Can Do to Help Stop It

### Butler County Department of Recycling & Waste Management

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### Litter is YOUR Problem Because It:

- ◆ Reduces the appeal of public places, including streets, parks and waterways—and is a factor when businesses choose their site locations
- ◆ Kills aquatic life in our waterways, blocks drainage systems and causes flooding
- ◆ Reduces property values and community pride
- ◆ Endangers people, particularly when it includes items such as broken glass, needles and syringes
- ◆ Is a crime that attracts more crime
- ◆ Is a fire hazard
- ◆ Costs communities huge sums of money to clean up and uses YOUR tax dollars



### People Litter For One Of Three Reasons:

- ◆ they feel no sense of ownership, even though areas such as parks and beaches are public property
- ◆ they believe someone else will pick up after them
- ◆ litter has already accumulated

### What Can You Do?

- ◆ Set an example for others, especially children, by not littering.
- ◆ Carry a litter bag in your car.
- ◆ Make sure trash cans have lids that can be securely fastened.
- ◆ Tie papers in a bundle before placing them in a curbside recycling bin.
- ◆ If you own a business, check dumpsters daily to see that top and side doors are closed.
- ◆ If you or a member of your family is involved in a civic group, scouting, or recreational sports program, encourage the group to “adopt” a spot in your community and maintain it on a regular basis.
- ◆ Make litter bags for your bicycle, and give them to your friends, too.
- ◆ Report areas where people have illegally dumped garbage and debris to your local highway, municipal, or conservation office and ask that the trash be removed.
- ◆ Volunteer to help organize a cleanup.

### Resources:

**Keep America Beautiful**—[www.kab.org](http://www.kab.org)

**Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful**—  
[www.keeppabeautiful.org](http://www.keeppabeautiful.org)





**Tri-County CleanWays** (A local affiliate of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful operating in Lawrence, Butler and Mercer Counties) - 724.658.6925



**PennDOT** (can provide roadside cleanup supplies and operates an Adopt-A-Highway program for state-owned roads—Butler Office—724.284.8800

**Specific Community Information**—some municipalities in Butler County operate their own adopt-a-road cleanup program for municipally-owned streets and roads. To get more information, call your local municipal office to see if they operate one of these programs.

**Allegheny Aquatic Alliance**—A local nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring the waters of Western Pennsylvania to their natural state by removing and combating pollution, reinstating the organic environment, and educating the community of the threats to our waterways in order to empower and encourage public action for watershed preservation. They operate a cleanup of Connoque-nessing Creek each year. [www.alleghenyaquaticalliance.org](http://www.alleghenyaquaticalliance.org) 724.371.0416



### Cleanup Organizing Tips:

Consider organizing a litter cleanup in your neighborhood, near your business or as close to your neighborhood or business as possible. Cleanups can be of any size. Following these guidelines and getting support from your municipality will insure that your group will have a half-day of fun and rewarding work that will benefit the community and the natural environment.

#### Plan Ahead:

1. Find a littered area you would like to clean up. Assess safety of site. If needed, obtain permission from private landowners. 2. Set meeting time, date, and location. Plan a rain date. 3. Recruit a core group of friends to volunteer, and then use posters and word-of-mouth to bring in more people. 4. Register your cleanup with your town or city by going to your local government and making sure they know what you are doing and when – and coordinate with local law enforcement. 5. Make sure whatever company collects trash in your community is available to haul away whatever you pick up so you'll need to coordinate that as well. 6. Purchase inexpensive trash bags and latex/latex-free gloves—or they might be provided for free by calling PennDOT or your municipality.

#### Day of Cleanup:

1. Bring water, snacks, a phone, sunscreen, shirts, bags, grabbers, safety checklist, and a first aid kit. 2. Welcome and thank volunteers and orient them to the area to be cleaned. Using a sign-in/ liability waiver sheet enhances safety awareness. 3. Review the safety checklist with your volunteers. 4. Do your cleanup. If you bag recyclables separately (a nice thing to do!), put them out with your regular curbside pickup. 5. Gather for a snack and sharing of discoveries. 6. Take a group photo for your website and newsletter!

### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO DECOMPOSE

Paper Towel	- 2-4 weeks	Cigarette Butts	- 10-12 years
Banana Peel	- 3-4 weeks	Leather shoes	- 25-40 years
Paper Bag	- 1 month	Tinned Steel Can	- 50 years
Newspaper	- 1.5 months	Foamed Plastic Cups	- 50 years
Apple Core	- 2 months	Rubber-Boot Sole	- 50-80 years
Cardboard	- 2 months	Plastic containers	- 50-80 years
Cotton Glove	- 3 months	Aluminum Can	- 200-500 yrs
Orange peels	- 6 months	Plastic Bottles	- 450 years
Plywood	- 1-3 years	Disposable Diapers	- 550 years
Wool Sock	- 1-5 years	Monofilament Fishing Line	- 600 years
Milk Cartons	- 5 years	Plastic Bags	- 200-1000 yrs

**\$11.5 billion** is spent on litter cleanup across the U.S. annually.

#DontTrashFact

### Board of Butler County Commissioners

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