



## LITTER MANAGEMENT

### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

# Littering

## Safeguarding Townsville's Environmental Health

Litter on land and in our waterways looks unsightly, and can be a threat to the health of others in the community. Leaving litter in a public place is unpleasant, unhealthy, and against the law. A small investment of time and commitment on your part means we can all keep our city clean by disposing of rubbish responsibly.

Litter is an important environmental issue. By carelessly discarding rubbish you are hurting every member of society. It causes harm to people and animals, damages our waterways, costs the community money and shows we do not care for our environment. Fortunately, it's easy to help prevent and reduce litter.

### LITTERING>>

Any waste not properly disposed of becomes litter, which can be harmful to both the environment and to public health. Litter not only reduces our city good looks but also damages the environment.

Littering includes:

- Litter on land or water in a public or an open private place (this includes littering from a vehicle)
- Litter, which is likely to cause danger or harm to people, animals, premises or property in the community
- Placing advertising material in a public place or open private place other than in a mailbox or under a door
- Placing advertising material on vehicles
- Uncovered loads in trailers or vehicles
- Illegal dumping



Entertainment events create large amounts of litter which requires careful planning and proactive control.

### THE EFFECTS OF LITTERING>>

Littering causes problems to our environment and to the health of others in our community.

If washed down storm water drains, litter can make its way o our water ways and beaches, moving the problem from land to water. This may affect the water we drink and use for recreation and can also harm or kill our wildlife.

Plastic litter can choke or suffocate birds and marine life and can trap small animals, while organic matter such as dog litter, leaves and grass clippings pollutes our waterways with algal blooms and harmful bacteria.

Wherever there are large quantities of litter, there are also likely to be hidden and more difficult to detect pollutants in the water. These include oil, grease, heavy metals, fertilisers, and household poisons.

Items such as broken glass and syringes can be health hazards when disposed of carelessly in public places. Accumulated litter and cigarette butts disposed of in our streets are potential fire hazards and can cause bad odours. Next time you're out and about, be sure to do the right thing and put your rubbish in the bin.

### **PEOPLE LITTERING>>**

The reasons people litter are varied because not everyone will agree on what litter is. Organic items are least likely to be regarded as litter. Most people do not regard an apple core as litter, and not many people think that dog droppings are litter. Insufficient or overflowing garbage cans in public places are another reason why people may litter.

### **PREVENTING LITTERING>>**

There are a number of simple ways to stop littering.

- Only dispose of litter and rubbish in bins designed for that purpose. If you can't find a bin take your rubbish home and dispose of it there.
- Never throw your rubbish from moving vehicles. Apart from endangering people, you may face heavy fines.
- Always remember that stormwater drains flow straight to our waterways. Don't throw any litter in the street or gutter as it may end up in our waterways and beaches.
- Wash cars on grass and never on the road or driveways where detergents will wash into the drainage system.

- Always dispose of unwanted chemicals responsibly; never pour them into gutters or drains. Paint, thinners, garden pesticides and herbicides are poisonous to wildlife. Council can advise you of the best way to dispose of these.
- Prevent oil leaking from your car as it could end up in our waterways.
- Use a reusable cloth bag when you are shopping, or choose cardboard boxes instead of plastic bags whenever possible. Never dispose of plastic bags carelessly – they are one of the biggest killers of marine life.
- Use washing detergents which contain no phosphates to prevent excessive amounts of these entering the drainage system.
- Avoid excessive use of chemical fertilisers as runoff from these into the waterways cause algal blooms to occur.
- Create less rubbish by purchasing products with less wrapping or biodegradable packaging.
- Always take a litter-bag with you when walking your dog. Don't leave droppings in the gutter or footpath as they will wash into our waterways and contaminate them.

If you see rubbish, abandoned vehicles, graffiti or other litter, take note of it and contact Council with these details, so that these items can be removed.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION >>**

Contact Townsville City Council on 4727 9000 or visit the website [www.townsville.qld.gov.au](http://www.townsville.qld.gov.au)

**Your Council is committed to encouraging responsible environmental health to benefit the entire community.**

**Please be a considerate and competent resident.**