

CIGARETTE LITTER PREVENTION PROGRAM



PROGRAM PROFILE

Cigarette Butts are the most littered item in America. But they don't have to be.

The Keep America Beautiful *Cigarette Litter Prevention Program* is the nation's largest to combat cigarette litter. Researched and developed since 2002, the program supports targeted efforts in communities to reduce cigarette butt litter.

The overall littering rate for cigarette butts is 65%, and tobacco products comprise 38% of all U.S. roadway litter, according to Keep America Beautiful 2009 National Litter Research.

Why do smokers litter? 63% of cigarette butt littering is attributable to individual motivations. Mostly, it's lack of awareness about the environmental impact and insufficient ash receptacles. New ordinances are also moving more smokers outdoors or to designated areas.

Why it matters

Residents and businesses "pick up" the tab. Cigarette butt litter has to be cleaned up. This requires additional sidewalk and street sweeping, greenway and park maintenance, storm drain cleaning, and increased maintenance of storm water filters.

Community quality-of-life suffers. Not paying attention to quality-of-life issues can result in a decline in a city's foot traffic, tourism, business development, and housing. Focusing on small improvements, like reducing cigarette butt litter, creates safer and more economically vibrant communities.

Recreation areas become less attractive. Tobacco litter represents nearly 32% of all litter in outdoor recreation areas. Cigarette butt litter on beaches and waterfronts, at ball fields and parks, picnic areas and hiking trails decreases the appeal of these natural escapes. It also creates fire hazards, impacts local wildlife, and eventually contributes to lost tourism and revenue.

Cigarette butt litter happens everywhere.

During the Ocean Conservancy's 2009 Annual International Coastal Cleanup, U.S. communities reported that cigarette butts were the most littered item, representing 33% of items collected. According to the Ocean Conservancy an estimated 60% - 80% of all litter starts out on land.

Cigarette butt litter is not just a problem for city centers or other dense urban settings. It's also a persistent problem in settings such as parks, recreation areas, beaches, lakefronts and waterways, roadways and highways, and special events.



Cigarette butts don't disappear. About 95% of cigarette filters are composed of cellulose acetate, a form of plastic which does not quickly degrade and can persist in the environment.

- **Clean VA Waterways** <http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/cigarettelitterhome.html>

“According to public works officials, Virginia Beach exceeded its budget to clean storm drains by more than \$3 million – and cigarette butts were a significant component in these costs.”

- **Dan Baxter, chairman of Virginia Beach Clean Community Coalition**

“The Times Square Alliance **Cigarette Litter Prevention Program**, in conjunction with Keep America Beautiful, has made a significant difference in reducing cigarette butt litter throughout this neighborhood.”

- **Bob Esposito, Senior VP of Operations, Times Square Alliance, New York City.**

How the program works

The **Cigarette Litter Prevention Program** uses four proven strategies to reduce cigarette butt litter:

- Review local litter laws for inclusion of cigarette litter, and support enforcement
- Educate the public using PSA's to build awareness
- Install ash receptacles to support proper disposal
- Distribute pocket ashtrays to adult smokers

When the program is implemented using these four strategies, **cigarette litter, on average, is reduced by half.**

Program impact is measured by counting littered cigarette butts in a representative section of the program area before and after program launch.

A successful and sustainable **Cigarette Litter Prevention Program** requires a combined effort from community stakeholders: residents, businesses, government, neighborhood organizations, non-profits, volunteer groups and community leaders.

By 2009, nearly 600 **Cigarette Litter Prevention Programs** had been implemented in 49 states and Washington DC. Keep America Beautiful has also partnered with other organizations, including the International Downtown Association and the BoatUS Foundation, to offer this program to more cities and to marinas across the country.

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The **Cigarette Litter Prevention Program** is a program of Keep America Beautiful, Inc. Established in 1953, Keep America Beautiful creates cleaner, greener communities and public spaces by preventing litter, reducing waste, recycling, community greening efforts, and spurring volunteer action. Learn more at **kab.org**

