

Cigarette Litter Prevention Program: **Program Venues “Fast Facts”**

Cigarette butt litter happens everywhere.

It's not only a problem for city centers or other dense urban settings. Cigarette butt litter is persistent at beaches, recreation areas, along roadways, local events and tourist attractions, as well as on college campuses. Use these tips to help reduce cigarette butt litter in a variety of settings.

City Centers

City blocks with high-density retail, nightlife, and tourism are a good target for cigarette butt litter prevention and education. Downtown areas can benefit from all aspects of the *Cigarette Litter Prevention Program*, including targeted media and education campaigns, distribution of pocket ashtrays, and strategically placed ash receptacles.

They are home to many transition points, areas where a smoker must extinguish a cigarette before proceeding, such as outside retail stores, hotels, office buildings, and at bus shelters and train platforms. A full 30% of litter at transition points is cigarette butts, and pedestrians are the source of 95.8% of litter at these areas.ⁱ

Parks and Recreation Areas

Cigarette butt litter at picnic areas, golf courses, soccer fields and ballparks, hiking paths, and other wilderness or recreation areas mars the natural beauty of these places. It can also create fires, and may injure wildlife. Tobacco litter represents 31.5% of litter in parks and other outdoor recreation areas.ⁱⁱ To prevent cigarette butt litter in these areas:

- Feature signage at transition points, and entrance and other access areas.
- Offer education and pocket ashtrays at appropriate park events, such as July 4th celebrations, golf or tennis tournaments, and outdoor festivals.
- Add receptacles at parking lots, picnic areas, scenic overlooks, and other places where park visitors tend to congregate. When selecting ash receptacles, choose those that are least able to be vandalized, and ensure ongoing maintenance and security.

Beaches, Lakefronts, and Waterways

As it is difficult to retrieve cigarette butt litter buried in the sand or tossed in the water, provide education and opportunities to reduce litter before visitors enter a beach, marina, or waterfront area. Cigarette butt litter at water front locations may prompt cities to extend smoking bans to these areas, shifting discarded butts to local streets.

- To reach individual boaters, collaborate with local boating safety organizations, marina operators, and other clean and safe water groups and clubs.
- Display signage and other targeted education at entry points, boat fueling areas, changing rooms, and concessions.
- Distribute portable ashtrays to adult smokers throughout the beach and boating community. Consider engaging local river patrols, waterfront and marina owners, and yachting associations to help post signage and hand deliver portable ashtrays that fit in cup holders.
- Ensure ash receptacles are at transition points, including vehicle and pedestrian access areas to the beach, docks and piers, parking lots, boat rental, residential areas, boardwalks and other retail locations.

Roadways and Highways

As daily commutes lengthen, more Americans are snacking, smoking, and eating meals inside the car. This means cigarette butt litter along roadways, highway on/off ramps, and median strips is growing. Tobacco products comprise 38% of all U.S. roadway litter and 53% of roadside litter is attributed to motorists.ⁱⁱⁱ Cigarette butts dropped out of car windows are litter and a potential fire hazard. Consider these tactics for educating drivers:

- Start with signage at intersections. Know the rules and get necessary permissions. Enlist the guidance of local, state, or federal department of transportation authorities.
- Add ash receptacles at road-side rest stops and welcome centers, gas stations and convenience stores, parking lots, food courts, and picnic areas.
- Establish a litter hotline to report drivers dropping butts out of car windows.
- Partner with your Department of Transportation, local Department of Motor Vehicles, American Automobile Association, adopt-a-highway, car dealerships, and local car rental companies to educate smokers and provide portable auto ashtrays.

Special Events and Attractions

Local outdoor events, such as fairs, festivals, sports gatherings, concerts, and other one-day or multi-day public events can create conditions for increased cigarette butt litter. This also includes museums, historical sites, and other local attractions. Target these for cigarette butt litter prevention:

- If it's a "litter free event", make sure event planners understand that includes cigarette butt litter. As a reminder, post signage and provide adult event attendees who are smokers with pocket ashtrays.
- Ensure that in addition to waste receptacles there are ash receptacles. Consider using ash receptacles that are easily moved around to facilitate maximizing effectiveness of placement. Ask grounds managers to maintain receptacles and store them between events.
- Plan sufficient time to get approval from local government, fair board, or other overseeing entities for the placement of ash receptacles.
- At local tourist attractions, use signage and place ash receptacles at welcome centers or visitor reception areas, museum access points, and ticket purchase locations.

College and University Campuses

When implementing the *Cigarette Litter Prevention Program* on college campuses, consider these guidelines:

- To improve program sustainability, engage a cross-section of the college community, including college administration, faculty, and student leadership. Confirm that all students involved are of a legal smoking age.
- Be aware of smoking restrictions and local ordinances. Many campuses are either non-smoking or only permit smoking in designated areas. Ensure there are ash receptacles in any designated smoking areas. If the whole campus is non-smoking, the litter problem will likely move to the immediate surrounding community.
- Ask adult smokers who are given a pocket ashtray to sign a pledge to dispose of cigarette butt litter appropriately and only smoke in designated areas. Be prepared to message that the program is to prevent cigarette butt litter, and not to encourage smoking.
- Expand the reach of education efforts and post cigarette butt litter messages in online and printed campus newspapers or student and faculty publications.

ⁱ Source: Keep America Beautiful 2009 Litter Research.

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