



Why is it Important to Remove Litter?

Use the information below to guide a discussion with your group about the importance of participating in a cleanup and help us spread the word.

Litter washes into storm sewers, which empty into waterways that eventually provides us with **drinking water**! For example, more than 130,000 Allentown residents receive their drinking water from the Little Lehigh Creek. This is the same water residents will also use to shower with. Please do not throw anything into the street or the storm sewers, especially motor oil.

See how many reasons your group can come up with why littering is harmful.

Litter also harms plants and degrades natural areas.

When garbage is dumped, it can kill or stunt plant growth. Few people think about the harm to natural areas from litter.



Litter kills or injures animals. Many small animals crawl into bottles or jars and get stuck and slowly starve to death. Animals get caught in plastic six pack rings, plastic bags, fishing line and a multitude of throwaways. Birds that are stuck, can't fly away from danger. Sometimes animals caught in six pack rings are strangled as they grow too big for the opening. Animals get cut, infected and die. Every year, millions of birds, fish and animals die from litter.

Litter costs money to clean up. PA Department of Transportation spends more than \$10 million every year to clean up roadside litter. It costs \$835/ton to clean up illegal dumpsites in PA.

Litter can be dangerous. Litter has caused car accidents as drivers try to avoid debris on the road.

Litter In the Lehigh Valley Comes From:



Litterbugs who intentionally or accidentally drop trash on the ground, sidewalks, or streets while walking or driving

Trash spilled during collection - Please report hauler spills of City trash or recyclables to the Hotline.

Trash out on the wrong day or too early - Put trash out after 6 p.m. and before 10 p.m. only on your designated collection nights.

Trash stored or put out carelessly - Do not put trash out in a loose pile or open box or bag. Use sturdy, tied trash bags and/or a lidded trash can.

Dumpsters overflowing / littered dumpster areas - businesses must maintain and keep the dumpster area clean.

Illegal dumping of waste on public or private property

Uncovered trucks or unsecured loads - Call the DEP Hotline 570.820.4854 or 1.866.255.5158 (press #2) with a license #, vehicle description, and time of incident.

Did You Know?



The most COMMONLY littered item is the cigarette butt? Many smokers believe that cigarette butts are not litter - and decompose quickly. This is not true. Volunteers spend countless hours picking up cigarette butts along streams, miles from where someone threw it on the ground.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Decomposition Time</u>
Glass Bottle	Approximately 1 Million Years
Plastic 6-Pack Collar	450 Years
Aluminum Can	200 – 500 Years
Plastic Jug	70 Years
Rubber Boot Sole	50 – 80 Years
Steel Cans	50 Years
Leather	Up To 50 Years
Nylon Fabric	30 – 40 Years
Plastic Film Canister	20 – 30 Years
Painted Wooden Stake	13 Years
Degradable Plastic Bag	10 – 20 Years
Disposable Diapers	10 – 20 Years
Cigarette Butt	One – Five Years
Cotton Rag	One – Five Months
Orange Peel/Banana Peel	Two – Five Weeks
Piece Of Paper	Two – Four Weeks
Rolled Newspaper	Two – Six Weeks
Candy Wrapper	One – Three Months
Rope	Three – 14 Months

Web Resources:

PA Department of Transportation's website: <http://www.dot.state.pa.us>

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful & PA CleanWays

Allentown, PA site: <http://www.allentownrecycles.org>

Australian site: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/litter/factsaboutlitter.htm>