

Why so important?

It is estimated that over 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are littered onto the ground each year.

This is approximately 1,687,500,500 pounds of cigarette filters on the ground each year.

During rainstorms, precipitation carries these cigarette butts through the storm sewer systems and out into the Hudson River, potentially hurting the aquatic wildlife and water resources.

Subsequently, the City of Poughkeepsie receives its potable water supply from the Hudson River.

DON'T POLLUTE THE WATER YOU DRINK!



Cigarette butts collecting in a catch basin, waiting for the next rainstorm to pollute your water supply.



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City of
Poughkeepsie, NY

Cigarette Litter:

small filter,

BIG PROBLEM



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Cigarette Litter



Cigarette Litter: It may be small, but its impacts are large when it comes to the environment.

As one of the smallest pieces of litter, cigarette litter represents over 20% of litter collected during community cleanup initiatives. **Most cigarette butts are NOT biodegradable!** Cigarette filters contain a cellulose acetate in the form of a fiber that is similar looking to cotton thread. This acetate degrades in the environment very slowly, possibly many years.

Due to its size, cigarette litter is easily carried away into storm sewer systems during rainstorms. Additionally, they are the most difficult to pick up during cleanup initiatives due to their size, and in return become one of the most expensive litter items to clean up.



Why Do People Litter?

- Most people who smoke, do not tolerate littering, but seem to overlook the littering of their cigarette butts due to their size. **No matter what the size, litter is still litter.**
- Most people tend to toss their cigarette butts onto the ground because there may already be existing cigarette butts. **This will not exempt you from local littering ordinances. Be the leader, not the follower.**
- There are not enough ash receptacles. **This is no exception to the rule. Find another way to properly manage the cigarette butts or risk being fined.**

What Can You Do To Make A Difference?

- Focus your attention and efforts to educate smokers and non-smokers the hazards that cigarette litter introduce to our environment. A little information can go a long way.
- Use a portable ashtray in your car, carry a pocket ashtray, or use ash trash receptacles when smoking outside.
- Do not throw cigarette butts out of the car window. Contain them in portable ash trays in your car until you are able to properly dispose of them.
- Do not throw cigarette butts onto the ground. Find an ash receptacle that will allow you to properly dispose of them.

How Dangerous is Cigarette Litter?

- A motorist in a San Diego County flicked a cigarette butt out of his window onto the median of interstate 8, eventually sparking a fire that burned 10,000+ acres, destroying 16 homes, and charring 64 vehicles.
- A wildfire burned 247 acres on the Camp Pendleton Base in California, started by a cigarette butt from a passing motorist.
- Cigarette butts jammed into a trash chute in Richmond, Virginia destroyed 26 buildings and caused \$20 million in damages.
- Cigarettes contain over 165 different chemicals that birds and small animals ingest, causing internal complications.



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