



TAKE A STAND

FACT SHEET - RUBBISH

The Problem

When you think about rubbish or litter, what springs to mind? In law, a person is guilty of a littering offence if they throw down, drop or otherwise deposit and leave any item which spoils a public place. Because of this, the word 'litter' is open to a wide interpretation in legal terms.

ENCAMS, the environmental charity which runs the Keep Britain Tidy campaign, describe litter as 'waste in the wrong place caused by human agency' which simply means that people create litter.

Rubbish can take a number of forms and in some cases can be dangerous. In most cases rubbish looks bad, smells terrible, is expensive to clean up and can often be prevented.

Part of the problem is that different people have different views on what the term 'littering' actually means and what exactly counts as littering or dropping rubbish. For example, some people might think that dropping chewing gum or a drinks can is wrong, but those same people might not necessarily see a problem with throwing a single cigarette butt or a tissue on the floor. Some people believe that it doesn't matter if small items are dropped onto the floor, but if lots of people have that view,

those little pieces of rubbish can soon add up to a big problem.

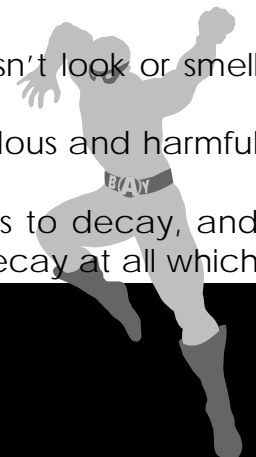
Littering can also be caused when people put their bin bags out days when the refuse collection vehicles are not due. Putting the rubbish out when it's not due for collection means that bin bags can be split open and rubbish can spread out onto the streets, which causes littering and food for seagulls!

Another form of littering often takes place when people are driving and don't want to leave rubbish in their cars. For example rather than use an ashtray in a car, a smoker might throw a cigarette out of the window which not only causes litter but also can create a fire risk.

Businesses also have a responsibility to make sure that the rubbish (called commercial waste) from their premises is stored properly and does not cause problems to the environment or the public.

The Message

- Rubbish generally doesn't look or smell good.
- Rubbish can be hazardous and harmful to public health.
- Rubbish can take years to decay, and in some cases won't decay at all which





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can create a permanent problem in the environment.

- Rubbish can harm and kill wildlife.
- Research suggests that in areas where littering is a problem, there is a higher chance that other incidents of environmental crime will take place such as graffiti and fly-tipping.

Break the Rules – Pay the Price

Those that are caught littering may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £75. Fixed Penalty Notices are issued as an alternative to prosecution. This means that if someone receives a Notice and chooses not to pay it, they could face a higher fine or be prosecuted which will result in a criminal conviction.

Take a Stand

Take a Stand encourages everyone in the community to work together to clean up Torbay. There are many different ways in which you can take a stand against littering, for example you might want to organise a community litter pick in your area. For further information about community litter picks check out www.encams.org or contact Community Protection.

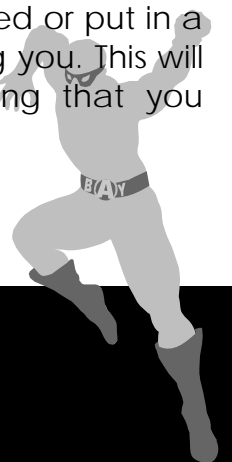
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Tips

The Bay Team's top tips for being rubbish savvy are:

- If you can't find a public bin, try to take your rubbish home and dispose of it there.
- Put bins and bin bags out on collection days or the night before the collection to avoid litter being spilled out onto the streets.
- If you need stronger bags that are less likely to split, contact the council to request seagull proof bags.
- If you know you're going to be creating rubbish (for example having a picnic on the beach) take a bag with you so that it is easier to get rid of.
- If you know someone that has a car, encourage them to keep a bag or a collapsible bin in the car so that rubbish like coffee cups and sweet wrappers can be kept in one place and disposed of easily.
- If you buy something in a shop and don't need it to be wrapped or put in a bag, tell the person serving you. This will save you taking packaging that you don't need.

Join the Bay Team





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If you have an idea as to how people could be encouraged not to litter and to respect their environment, contact the Community Protection Team at:

 community.protection@torbay.gov.uk
 01803 208091

www.torbay.gov.uk/takeastand

