

Litter

Fact sheet



Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA Victoria) is the state's independent environmental regulator. Under the powers of the *Environment Protection Act 1970*, EPA is responsible for protecting the environment and the community through effective regulation of industry and pollution. EPA's vision is a healthy environment that supports a liveable and prosperous Victoria. As part of its *5 Year Plan* EPA is committed to ensuring land is safely managed and no new, or existing activities contaminate land.

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What is litter?

Litter is the most visible sign of pollution. Discarded cigarette butts or plastic bottles, rubbish falling from an unsecured load on a trailer and grass clippings swept into the gutter are all forms of litter.

Litter builds up on our streets, blocks our gutters and drains, eventually finding its way into our creeks, rivers (including the Yarra) and Port Phillip Bay and onto our beaches. It can injure people and wildlife. It encourages pests such as rats, mice and seagulls, and spreads germs and disease.

EPA's role in regulating litter pollution

EPA has a key role in protecting Victorians and the environment from litter. Under the *Environment Protection Act 1970*, littering is illegal. EPA officers, local government officers, police and other enforcement agencies can issue 'on the spot' fines for littering. Offenders can also end up in court.

EPA has a public litter reporting program, allowing Victorians to report anyone they see littering from (or near) a motor vehicle. It was the first of its type in Australia and more than 40,000 Victorians are registered litter reporters. Fines range from more than \$280 for a dropped cigarette butt to over \$6000 if the matter ends up in court. EPA has issued more than 140,000 fines for littering since 2005.

The most common forms of litter reported are cigarette butts, food packaging, beverage containers and poorly secured rubbish.

To support, educate and inform Victorians about littering, EPA has funded a Litter Prevention Officers Program, where councils around the State have received a dedicated officer to work with the community on strategies to address litter problems.

EPA has an important role regulating large scale littering, which is also known as illegal dumping. A dedicated Illegal Dumping Strike Force team supports businesses to understand their legal requirements for managing waste and recyclable material, conducts investigations and leads enforcement action.

Individuals can be fined more than \$610,000 or be sentenced to seven years' jail for illegal dumping. Companies can be fined more than \$1,000,000.

You can report littering from motor vehicles by:

Registering with EPA as a litter reporter and submitting reports online.

Downloading the Report Litter free iPhone app.

Calling the 24-hour Pollution Hotline on **1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC)**.

All you need to do is note the registration, make, colour, model, location, date and time the littering occurred, and what was dropped, and report it within seven days.

REPORTING LITTER

To report litter you can submit an **online form**, use the **iPhone Report Litter app**, or complete and send in a **litter report form**.

For more information call EPA's 24-hour Pollution Hotline **1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842)**.

Litter reports cannot be taken over the phone and only cover Victorian-registered vehicles.

Visit **epa.vic.gov.au** for more information on littering, tips on how you can help or to register to become an EPA litter reporter.

