

# Litter

If waste is left in the wrong place, like on the pavement or in someone's garden, we call it litter. Common examples of litter include sweet wrappers, crisp packets, bottles, cans and chewing gum.

## The environment

Once a piece of litter has been dropped, it can take a long time for it to break down.

However there is no guarantee a piece of litter will stay in the same place. When it rains litter can be washed into drains and then rivers. From there it can end up in the ocean and then on our beaches.

Littering has many harmful effects on the world we live in.



## On wildlife

It is estimated that around 70,000 animals are injured or killed by litter every year in the UK. Animals like cats and dogs can cut their delicate paws on broken glass and sharp objects left on the pavement. Hedgehogs can become stuck in cans as their spines get trapped stopping them from being able to back out. In the ocean sea turtles can mistake plastic bags for their normal food source, jellyfish.

As well as hurting animals, litter can also attract animals we do not want like rats, pigeons and foxes who see it as a potential food source. Encouraging these animals into residential areas can be a bad thing as some carry diseases.

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## On our pockets

You can be fined up to £80 on the spot for dropping litter. This can increase to £2500 if the case goes to court. That is a lot of money to pay for dropping a crisp packet!

It is estimated that in England councils spend £885 million every year clearing litter from our streets. If the amount of litter increases these costs will increase and taxpayers will have to pay more to cover them.



## Littering facts

Around 2.25 million pieces of rubbish are dropped every day in the UK.

We drop over 30 million tonnes of litter in the UK every year.

48% of people admit to dropping litter.

94% of people think dropping litter is a fairly or very irritating behaviour.

At least one item of litter is found on every 50 cm of beach.

Did you know you can borrow litter pick equipment from your local council if you want to do a litter pick in your school?



## Fly tipping

Fly tipping is littering on a larger scale. It is the illegal dumping of waste usually on roadsides, lay bys and even private land. Items dumped can range from smaller items like fridges or furniture all the way up to whole lorry loads of waste.