



Tobacco Litter Hurts Everyone

Litter Statistics

- Forty-one tons of cigarette butts are littered in Santa Barbara County each year.¹
- It is estimated that 80% of littered cigarette butts end up in our waterways.¹
- In just three hours, 347,000 cigarette butts were collected from California beaches during the 2006 Coastal Cleanup Day. Tobacco litter was the number one trash item found.²
- There are over 175,000,000 pounds of cigarette butts discarded in the United States each year.³
- Over 4.5 trillion cigarettes are littered worldwide each year. They are the most littered item in the world.⁴

Public Health Concern

- Children can swallow, choke, or burn themselves on discarded cigarette butts. Every year the American Association of Poison Control Centers receive 8,000 reports of nicotine ingestion among children under six years of age.⁵
- After the ingestion of a tobacco product a child will show signs of poisoning. Symptoms range from vomiting and nausea, lethargy, gagging, and paleness, to irregular heartbeat and seizures.⁵
- U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 142,900 smoking-material (i.e., lighted tobacco products but not matches or lighters) fires in 2006. These fires caused:780 civilian deaths,1,600 civilian injuries, and \$606 million in direct property damage.⁶

Environmental Impact

- It is estimated that 1.69 billion pounds (845,000 tons) of butts wind up a litter worldwide per year. Cigarette filters are composed of cellulose acetate, a form of plastic, which is not biodegradable.⁷
- Cigarette butts discarded in parks, along sidewalks, and in street gutters miles from the coast, inevitably make their way through storm drains, creeks, and rivers to the beach and ocean leaking dangerous chemicals into our watershed.⁸
- The most common item of litter is cigarette related including cigarette butts, packets, and tobacco. Cigarette litter have been found in the stomachs of fish, birds, whales, and other animals who mistake them for food, swallowing harmful plastic and toxic chemicals.⁹

Economic Cost

- The cost of cleaning up tobacco litter adds up. Employees at parks, schools, hotels, restaurants and local governments all waste unnecessary manpower and resources to pick up discarded butt litter. Santa Barbara city/county agencies reported spending more than \$500 per month on this type of cleanup.¹
- Penn State University estimated that cigarette litter clean up costs were \$150,000 on its` campus each year.¹⁰
- Tobacco product litter is estimated to cost the City of San Francisco \$7,487,916 in direct costs.³ No matter how you do the math, cigarette litter costs society hundreds of millions of dollars per year.

**References available upon request*

**Tobacco Prevention Settlement Program
Santa Barbara 681-5407 or Santa Maria 346-7275
<http://www.sbcphd.org/tobacco>**

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