

WHAT IS LITTER?

Amelia County Department of Environmental Management

April 26, 2021

Litter is simply waste that is out of place. In other words, litter is trash that is outside of a proper disposal receptacle. Each of us can reduce the amount of litter in our neighborhood. Although some people litter on purpose there are also many “unintentional litterers”. Have you ever taken your trash to the landfill in the back of your pick-up truck and seen some of it blow out because it was not properly secured? Or put up yard sale signs that you never return to take down? Or thrown cigarette butts out your car window? (YES, cigarette butts are LITTER!)

A little forethought and preparation can prevent litter. Make sure your trash cans have secure lids and trash bags are tightly tied up before transporting them to the landfill. Keep an automobile litter bag in your car for fast food trash, etc. If you hold a yard sale or car wash, be sure to take down your signs after the event. Buy an automobile cigarette butt holder for your car or truck or stop by the County Administrator’s office and pick up one for free!

A cigarette thrown onto the ground will take 13 years to decompose! Every year during the International Coastal Cleanup, cigarette butts top the list as the most abundant item collected worldwide. Cigarette butt litter is also one of the top sources of litter in Virginia. So please – **Stop!** – **Think!** - and dispose of your cigarette butts in an appropriate litter receptacle.

Littering is not only ugly, it is also illegal. In Virginia, littering is a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail or a maximum fine of \$2,500.00 or both. Amelia County also has an Ordinance that prohibits littering with similar penalties.

We encourage everyone to PLEASE BE CAREFUL with your trash so that it does not become litter. And if you want to go the extra mile, don’t just prevent litter but clean it up as well. Start by keeping the road in front of your house clean or commit to picking up just 2 pieces of litter a day. If all of us did this, what a difference it would make! It’s worth a try!

If you have any questions about litter prevention or would like to join us in our litter clean-up events, please call us at 561-3039 or 561-3004.