

LITTER IN AMERICA

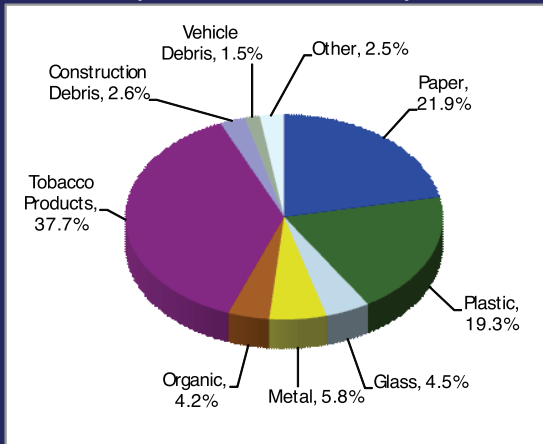
Results from the nation's largest litter study



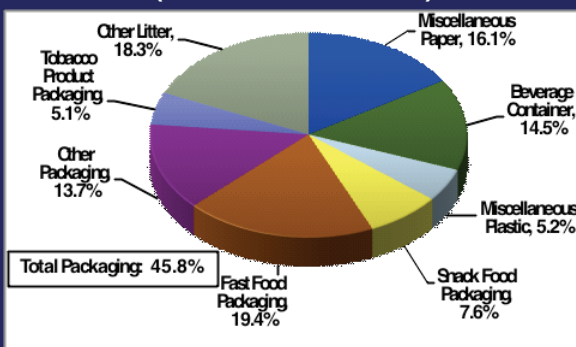
KEY FINDINGS: LITTER

The 2009 National Visible Litter Survey and Litter Cost Study* is the first new national litter research from Keep America Beautiful since 1969. The survey documents the composition of litter across America, its quantity, and locations, and the direct and indirect costs of litter to communities and businesses.

AGGREGATE COMPOSITION OF LITTER (ALL U.S. ROADWAYS)



TYPES OF LITTER 4-INCHES PLUS (ALL U.S. ROADWAYS)



LITTER REMAINS A PERVERSIVE PROBLEM.

While litter and littering have decreased, they continue to have a significant impact on our communities and environment.

- **Over 51 billion pieces of litter appear on U.S. roadways each year.** Most of it, 46.6 billion pieces (91%), is less than four inches. That's **6,729 items per mile** of roadway.

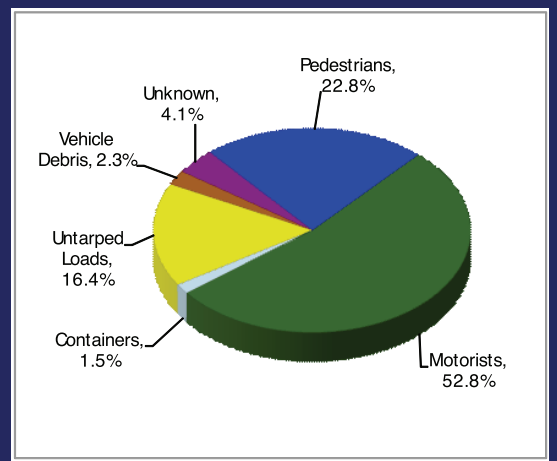
- **Tobacco products comprise roughly 38% of all U.S. roadway litter.** Paper (22%) and plastic (19%) are the next largest types of materials.

- **Packaging litter comprises nearly 46% of litter 4 inches and greater.** This includes fast food, snack, tobacco, and other product packaging.

- **Most roadway litter—76%—appears to originate from motorists and pedestrians.** Individual actions by motorists (52%), pedestrians (22.8%), improperly covered trucks and cargo loads (16.4%), and other behaviors are the source of roadway litter.

- **Most non-roadway litter is found at “transition points.”** These are at or near entrances to movie theaters, retail, bus stops, and other places where anyone consuming a food or tobacco product is required to discard the item before entering.

SOURCES OF AGGREGATE LITTER



MORE ON REVERSE SIDE...



* The 2009 National Visible Litter Survey and Litter Cost Study was prepared by MidAtlantic Solid Waste Consultants for Keep America Beautiful, Inc. Research reports and an executive summary can be downloaded at www.kab.org/research09. Keep America Beautiful, Inc. 2009 national litter and littering behavior research were conducted through a grant from Philip Morris USA, an Altria Company. Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company Foundation sponsored the creation of these fact sheets. All contents Copyright 2010 Keep America Beautiful, Inc. – www.kab.org. January 2010

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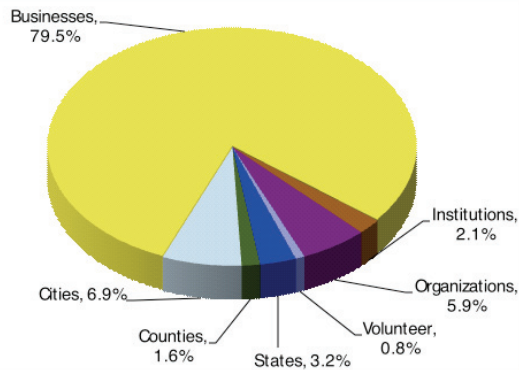
THE COST OF LITTER IS SUBSTANTIAL

Litter clean up costs the U.S. more than \$11.5 billion each year, with businesses paying \$9.1 billion. Local and state governments, schools, and other organizations pick up the remaining costs.

The indirect costs of litter are also considerable.

- The presence of litter in a community decreases property values by 7%.
- Of homeowners surveyed, 40% believe that litter reduces home values by 10% to 24%.
- 55% of realtors think that litter reduces property values by about 9%.
- 60% of property appraisers would reduce a home's value if it was littered.

BREAKDOWN OF DIRECT LITTER COSTS IN THE U.S.



WHAT'S CHANGED IN 40 YEARS?

A comparative analysis of the 2009 research and KAB's national litter study conducted in 1969 found that successful education, ongoing clean-up efforts, and changes in packaging are having an impact:

- Visible litter on our nation's roadways has **decreased approximately 61% in the past 40 years.**
- Paper, metal, glass, and beverage container litter has **decreased by 74.4% since the 1969 national study.**
- The incidence of **plastic items in the litter stream has increased over 165%.** This reflects a 340% per capita increase in use of plastic packaging over the past 40 years

Litter has environmental consequences. Wind and weather, traffic, and animals move litter into gutters, lawns and landscaped areas, alleyways, and parking structures. Litter near storm drains and beach debris are also likely to wash into local waterways, with potential for serious environmental contamination.

