

# ILLEGAL DUMPING

The decisions you make with your trash do matter and have consequences!

## What is Illegal Dumping?

Illegal dumping is the disposal of solid waste (Trash) in an unpermitted area. It's also known as "open dumping", "fly dumping", "midnight dumping", and "scattering rubbish."

Unlike litter, illegal dumping does not occur accidentally.



## Illegal Dumping in Lawrence and Mercer Counties

Illegal dumping is a serious problem in both Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

A study released in 2005 identified 143 roadside illegal dump sites in Mercer County. 55% of the identified sites were within 50 feet of a body of water and 13% of the sites had waste materials directly in the water.

Two studies have been done in Lawrence County to determine the extent of the problem. The first study was conducted in the early 1990's and resulted in the identification of 87 sites. Of these 87 sites, 61 are located within 100 feet of a wetland.

Illegal dumped materials often indicate the need for additional waste services or public education. For example, tires and household hazardous wastes are two of the most commonly dumped materials. Special programming can help by providing the public opportunities to properly dispose of these and other materials.

As a result of the study, Lawrence County implemented several programs to help address materials commonly found in the sites. These programs are in the process of being expanded into Mercer County.

### **Frequently Dumped Items**

Recyclables	Paint Cans
Tires	Mattresses
C&D Waste	Car Parts
HHW	White Goods
Yard Waste	Carpeting

**“Trash Attracts Trash.”** Illegally dumped trash will attract additional dumping in an area because people believe that it is a safe spot to dump. One improperly disposed item, even yard debris, can set off a chain reaction that is harmful to your community.



Leaving items, including recyclables beside or near any form of trash collection containers including the [Big Blue Bins](#) is illegal and enforceable by law! Not only is it unsightly and often results in litter blowing through the area, but it also attracts additional illegal behavior. This also includes the disposal of nonrecyclable items in the container.

## **Illegal Dumping Hurts Communities**

1. Economically
  - a. Cleanups are expensive (\$200 million nationwide and \$700-\$1,000 per ton to pick up illegally dumped trash and litter locally)
  - b. Decreases in land and property values
  - c. Tourism impacts
  - d. Livestock and Equipment damage
  - e. Loss of revenue
  
2. Environmentally
  - a. Water pollution
  - b. Soil Pollution
  - c. Air Pollution
  - d. Destroys wildlife habitat
  
3. Safety
  - a. Source of potential injuries
  - b. Creates breeding grounds for disease carrying mosquitoes and other vectors
  - c. Meth lab materials are sometimes discarded in illegal dumps
  
4. Socially
  - a. Attracts crime and other unwanted behavior

- b. Destroys community pride
- c. Illegally dumped debris attracts other trash

### **Why do people illegally dump?**

Don't want to pay landfill fees

Disrespect for other's property

Laziness

Ignorance of the law

### **What is Being Done in Lawrence and Mercer Counties to Combat Illegal Dumping?**

Local nonprofit organizations have taken a proactive role to cleanup up areas impacted by illegal dumping and educating the public about how to properly dispose of the trash. Partnership with local nonprofits also helps to keep the costs of cleanups to a minimum.

Other efforts and programs to reduce the illegal dumping of trash and recyclables include:

- Recycling events for appliances, batteries, electronics, fluorescent lights, household chemicals, and tires,
- Technical assistance to municipalities and organizations,
- Community beautification,
- Public education, and
- Enforcement.

The Recycling/Solid Waste Department, thanks to grants from the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, purchased several portable surveillance cameras to aid municipalities with the enforcement of their anti-dumping laws. The cameras are available to be shared with municipalities that are serious and ready to take action against illegal dumping. Our department is available to work with municipalities on enforcement, ordinances, cleanups, and other programs to address this problem.

### **What can you do to help?**

Report illegal dumping

Volunteer

Monitor cleaned areas to discourage repeat dumping

Learn about proper disposal

Participate in recycling programs

### **How to report illegal dumping**

Record the date, time and exact address where you have seen the illegal dumping. Write down a license plate number and a vehicle description if possible. It is also very helpful for physical descriptions. Make a list of the things that you saw that were dumped, so the authorities can prepare for clean up better. Contact your local police department, to file your report. You can also report illegal dumping by clicking here: [Illegal Dumping Report Form.](#)



