**Cigarette Littering Misconceptions**

http://preventcigarettelitter.org/why\_it\_matters/misconceptions.html

Only 10% of cigarette butts are properly deposited in ash receptacles-the least likely item to be placed in a receptacle.¹

**Why do many smokers litter?**

**Smokers discount the impact.**

A 2008 survey of over 1,000 smokers found that 35% toss five or more cigarette butts per pack on the ground.¹   Because a cigarette butt is small, smokers tend to overlook the consequences of littering.²  Cigarette litter research in Australia found that many smokers:

* Don’t believe littering their cigarette butts is inappropriate behavior.  Some believe they’re acting responsibly by dropping cigarettes to the ground and stepping on them to extinguish them.
* Consider dropping butts into gutters or storm drains a safe way to extinguish a cigarette. ³
* Blame their littering on a lack of well-placed bins for cigarette butts.  Over 80% of smokers said they would properly dispose of their butts if suitable bins were available.

**Too few ash receptacles.**

One of the strongest predictors of cigarette butt littering is the number of available ash receptacles, either as stand-alone or integrated into a trash can. For every additional ash receptacle, the littering rate for cigarette butts decreases 9%. Unfortunately, only 47% of observed sites have an ash or ash/trash receptacle.²

**Litter and cigarette butts are already on the ground.**

Smokers are more likely to litter if the environment contains any type of litter, not just cigarette butts. In fact, 77% of individuals in an intercept survey report that they thought cigarette butts were litter, but litter already on the ground is a strong predictor of cigarette butt littering.²

**Most cigarette littering happens at “transition points.”** Tobacco products comprise 30% of litter at transition points.² These are areas where a smoker must extinguish a cigarette before proceeding, such as outside retail stores, hotels, office buildings, before entering beaches, parks or other recreation areas, and at roadside rest areas, parking lots, bus shelters, and train platforms.  Messages about cigarette butt litter and ash receptacles at transition points are an important catalyst for changing behavior.

Just 14% of current smokers report owning a pocket ashtray, and 28.1% report that they do not have a receptacle for cigarette butts in their car.²

At the time of improper disposal, litterers were an average of 31 feet from an ash receptacle.²

The presence of litter in a community decreases property values by a little over 7%.2

Tobacco litter represents nearly 32% of all litter in outdoor recreation areas.2

Cigarette butt litter on beaches and waterfronts, at ball fields and parks, picnic areas and hiking trails decreases the appeal of these natural escapes. It also creates fire hazards, impacts local wildlife, and eventually contributes to lost tourism and revenue.

**¹** iQ Research & Consulting, Keep America Beautiful Pocket Ashtray Study, January 2008

² "Litter in America" 2009 KAB Research

**³** McGregor Marketing for Keep Australia Beautiful, 1998.

**4** Sweeney Research for Tobacco Information Centre and Keep South Australia Beautiful, 2000.

Source: Keep America Beautiful www.preventcigarettelitter.org