

# NEW JERSEY CLEAN COMMUNITIES LITTER PREVENTION FOR BUSINESSES



# Sustainability and Litter Prevention/Cleanup

Sustainability is a concept that has not only gotten the attention of the public, but also the business sector. Simply stated, sustainability is a societal goal that embraces environmentally friendly strategies that will help us to meet today's needs without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. Businesses that embrace sustainability should be sure to include litter prevention and cleanup in their company sustainability program.

## Litter – Background Information

### WHAT IS LITTER?

Litter is improperly managed waste. It is the kind of trash found on roadways, waterfronts, vacant lots and public places. Litter takes many forms: paper, plastics, metal cans, cigarette butts, glass, food packaging, tires and unauthorized graffiti.

### WHERE DOES LITTER COME FROM?

There are seven sources of litter: pedestrians, motorists, overflowing household garbage and recycling bins, business dumpsters, construction sites, uncovered trucks and loading docks and marinas. Litter is often blown by the wind until it is trapped somewhere, as along a fence.

### WHY DO PEOPLE LITTER?

People tend to litter when they think someone else will clean up, when an area is already littered (studies show that litter seems to beget more litter), and when they do not feel a sense of ownership or community pride.

### WHY IS LITTER A PROBLEM?

Even small amounts of litter are unhealthy and dangerous, as well as unsightly. Litter causes blighted landscapes resulting in an increase in taxes and a decrease in tourism and industry; loss of civic pride and morale; and a negative public image. Litter can also contribute to disease in people and animals, fires, and accidents, especially on roadways. In addition, litter often winds up in our waterways and oceans, thereby polluting these bodies of water and putting aquatic wildlife at risk.



# What Can Businesses Do to Help Reduce Litter?

## KEEP YOUR PROPERTY CLEAN:

- Place an adequate number of receptacles (trash and recycling) in parking lots as well as inside and outside all building entrances. Use covered trash containers to eliminate trash from spilling or blowing out.
- Keep your property clean of litter, including border areas and fence lines.
- Maintenance staff should be instructed to pick up litter on the property as needed.
- Employee volunteers can conduct periodic litter cleanup programs in and around the property and post photos of their efforts in a company newsletter, on the company website, etc.
- Remember to locate trash and recycling containers next to each other; label them with proper wording and pictures.
- Establish a regular schedule for emptying trash and recycling containers rather than emptying them on an “as needed” basis.
- Ensure roll-offs have adequate storage for quantity of waste generated between pickups.
- Establish smoking areas with appropriate cigarette butt receptacles for employees and customers.
- Prohibit dissemination of fliers on windshields.
- Require tarps on any vehicles transporting materials and instruct drivers to pick up materials that have fallen off their load.
- Add litter bags to all company vehicles.

## UTILIZE ANTI-LITTERING STRATEGIES IN INTERACTIONS WITH RETAIL CUSTOMERS:

- Reduce the amount of single-use disposable items provided to customers, e.g., plastic cutlery may not be needed for all orders. These items often become litter.
- Provide trash and recycling receptacles at drive-thru windows, in shopping cart areas and parking lots.
- Consider using “open front/side (no flap)” or “front/side (push flap)” receptacles for waste or recycling to prevent litter. These receptacles help to keep trash and recyclables from blowing out and becoming litter.
- Encourage customers not to litter.

## EDUCATE STAFF, CONTRACTORS, CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS ABOUT LITTER:

- Utilize the anti-littering resources provided by various organizations, such as the New Jersey Clean Communities and Keep America Beautiful programs.
- Educate employees, especially maintenance staff, that litter is not acceptable and should be picked up.
- Ensure that litter is picked up prior to lawn mowing operations.
- Ensure that contractors, clients and customers are aware of your commitment to a litter-free environment and buy-in to this philosophy while at your property.



## ADOPT-A-BEACH:

Adopt-A-Beach is a comprehensive, statewide, volunteer program created by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the New Jersey Clean Communities Council to encourage volunteers to clean and maintain beaches, bays, rivers and all waterways.

To officially adopt a section of beach or waterfront, volunteers must negotiate an agreement with the government agency that “owns” the section of beach or waterfront.

Businesses, community organizations, schools and individuals that would like to adopt-a-beach must register online. There is no fee charged to participate in the Adopt-A-Beach program - only your commitment to a clean New Jersey. For more information, contact the Clean Communities Council at 609-989-5900 or [njccc@njclean.org](mailto:njccc@njclean.org).

## ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY:

Adopt-A-Highway is a comprehensive, statewide, volunteer program created by the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the New Jersey Clean Communities Council to encourage volunteers to clean and maintain state highways.

To adopt a state highway, a business, community organization or individual must file an online application – see [cities.formstack.com/forms/aah\\_application](http://cities.formstack.com/forms/aah_application) - requesting permission to adopt a segment of state highway.

Once the application is approved, the applicant must execute an Agreement with the Clean Communities Council. The Agreement requires the applicant to clean the segment of state highway six times per year for two years, abide by safety regulations, follow protocol for the pickup and disposal of trash, and file reports cards after the cleanups.

The Clean Communities Council conducts safety training workshops and provides supplies for cleanups. The Department of Transportation installs recognition signs and picks up and disposes of the trash collected.

There is no fee charged to participate in the Adopt-A-Highway program - only a commitment to a clean New Jersey.



## PARTICIPATE IN CLEAN COMMUNITIES COUNCIL CLEANUP EVENTS:

The Clean Communities Council sponsors two major cleanup events each year - the Clean Water Challenge and the International Coastal Cleanup. The Clean Water Challenge takes place March 1 - April 30. The International Coastal Cleanup takes place in September; the date is determined by the Ocean Conservancy. Volunteers are always needed and encouraged to participate. Additional cleanup events are posted on the Clean Communities Council's website at [njclean.org](http://njclean.org) and on Facebook at [facebook.com/NJCleanCommunities](https://facebook.com/NJCleanCommunities).

Volunteers may also schedule cleanups at any time during the year, working closely with local governments.

## ENTER PARTNERSHIPS WITH ANTI-LITTERING ORGANIZATIONS:

Form partnerships with other businesses, state, county and municipal agencies, nonprofit organizations, civic organizations, and other organizations to promote litter prevention education and litter abatement programs.

## NOTE ON RECYCLABLE LITTER:

Many of the items found littered in the environment are recyclable, e.g., aluminum soda cans, plastic water and soda bottles and corrugated cardboard boxes. Accordingly, remember to provide litter cleanup crews not only with bags for trash, but also bags for the recyclable materials that are found during the cleanup event. Arrange for recyclable materials to be brought to a recycling processing center so that these materials can be used again rather than disposed as waste. Consistent with the quality requirements established for curbside recyclable materials, recyclable materials generated by litter cleanup events should be relatively clean, dry and empty. While the materials do not need to be in pristine condition to be recycled, they should not be caked with mud, filled with cigarette butts, soaking wet (e.g., cardboard) or filled with liquids.



## Litter Abatement Programs and Associated Organizations:

### NEW JERSEY CLEAN COMMUNITIES COUNCIL

New Jersey Clean Communities is a statewide, comprehensive, litter-abatement program created by the passage of the Clean Communities Act in 1986. [njclean.org](http://njclean.org)

### NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION [nj.gov/dep](http://nj.gov/dep)

### KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL®

Keep America Beautiful is a national nonprofit that “...inspires and educates people to take action every day to improve and beautify their community environment.” Keep America Beautiful’s goals are to end littering, improve recycling and beautify communities. [kab.org](http://kab.org)

