



Illegal dumping is defined as waste that has been deliberately dumped on public or private property. Illegal dumping can range from leaving waste in someone else's bin, tossing yard or garden waste into a nearby park or forest, and some municipalities include waste that has been placed curbside with a "free" sign into their definition.

### **The Stats**

Occurrences of illegal dumping continue to increase annually in cities across BC. In 2016 the City of Vancouver received 692 phone calls regarding illegal dumping, and picked up 75,000 dumped items, with the cost of clean-up totaling \$1.5 million.

The City of Nanaimo spends over \$20,000 annually to clean up illegally dumped waste and saw a 50% increase in illegal dumping from 2013 to 2015. The City of Surrey has seen illegal dumping costs increase from \$550,000 (2005) to nearly a \$1,000,000 (2015).

### **What are the effects of illegal dumping?**

Illegal dumping has negative impacts on all three pillars of sustainability: social, environmental, and economic.

#### *Social*

- Illegal dump sites encourage others to dump their own waste; dumpers may feel their trash becomes hidden amongst the pile.
- Surrounding area looks unsightly and dissuades others from visiting the neighbourhood.

#### *Environment*

- Pollutants can leach into ground and surface water; toxic gases eg. Freon, expelled into the atmosphere.
- Foraging through waste can harm or kill wildlife.
- Dried out illegally dumped organic material can serve as tinder for wildfires.

#### *Economy*

- Decrease neighbourhood property values.
- Increased municipal taxes to cover clean up costs.

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

Factors influencing illegal dumping include the cost of dumping waste at disposal facilities, and convenience; landfills are often located on the outskirts of cities. Another consideration is a lack of education. Residents may be unaware of convenient disposal options in their area. In 2016, the RCBC Recycling Hotline responded to 2600 inquiries specifically for household furniture; residents may be unaware of disposal and reuse options available in their community.

## **What programs are in place across BC to help prevent illegal dumping?**

### **Nanaimo:**

For the City of Nanaimo illegal dumping has become more common in residential neighbourhoods rather than in remote dump sites. Dumping in the City takes the shape of items being placed curbside with “free” signs. As an alternative, the City holds an annual city wide swap meet each spring, called the Reuse Rendezvous. During this weekend residents may place items curbside for others to take and reuse. After the weekend is over residents must remove their items and dispose of them properly.

### **Surrey:**

The City of Surrey has employed a couple of creative solutions for curbing illegal dumping. One is their Large Item Pick-Up Program (LIPU); residents in single-family homes who receive curbside collection are able to place up to 4 large items curbside for free collection each year. This program includes mattresses, couches, barbecues, and large appliances. In summer 2016 the City also piloted a “Pop-Up Junk Drop.” Multiple free community drop sites were set up across the City and residents were able to drop off household recycling and waste for free.

### **Kelowna:**

In Kelowna a community group of outdoor enthusiasts, the Okanagan Forest Task Force (OFTF), organizes volunteer clean up events for forested and outdoor recreational areas. Since their formation in August 2016, they have had 5 clean-up events and cleaned up over 50, 000 pounds of garbage. Another great initiative coming out of the Okanagan and one that the OFTF makes use of is the Clean the Creek app. App users can tag areas on a web based map where items have been illegally dumped. The user may then choose to return to the site to clean up the waste or groups like the OFTC can use the app to find a location for their next clean up event.

### **TNRD and RDOS:**

Both the Thompson-Nicola and Okanagan-Similkameen regional districts provide support to groups looking to organize Community Clean Up events. Both districts can supply groups with free garbage bags and will waive any tipping fees for the waste that is collected. If the dump sites are quite large the districts can also provide vehicles and support staff. Along with this initiative the TNRD runs a “Free Dump Day” program once a year at some transfer stations. During this event residents may bring up to \$20 worth of garbage to the transfer station and it will be accepted free of charge.

Learn more about illegal dumping at the 43<sup>rd</sup> annual RCBC Zero Waste Conference held in Whistler from June 21-23, 2017, as industry professionals from the government, non-profit, and business sectors discuss developing a provincial collaboration. Register today at <http://www.rcbcconference.ca>.



For more information contact the BC Recycling Hotline at 1 (800) 667-4321 or (604) 732-9253