



Illegal Dumping

Thousands of rubbish items such as construction materials, household goods, and abandoned cars are collected every year on Clean Up Australia Day.

Dumping this rubbish on private or public land without authorisation is illegal and degrades our environment.¹

What is Illegal Dumping?

Illegal dumping refers to the dumping of large items of rubbish in public areas such as roadsides or illegal land fills – private land where waste is dumped without Council or EPA approvals.²

People might dump rubbish illegally to avoid paying disposal fees or simply because they don't have the time or effort required for proper disposal.³

In Australia, furniture, packaging and organic waste are amongst the most common types of illegally dumped rubbish, although construction materials, scrap tyres, abandoned cars and hazardous waste are also found.²

Illegal dumping 'hot-spots' often include roadways, bushlands, and multi-unit premises.¹ Unsecured properties, including undeveloped lots, abandoned structures and unused industrial facilities are also used when dumpers want to avoid a disposal fee or find a waste depot that is closed or refuses to accept waste. The presence of illegally dumped materials often attracts additional dumping.³

Impacts of Illegal Dumping

The environmental impacts of illegal dumping are significant. Dumped rubbish can leach contaminants into our bushland, harming our plants and animals and blighting our landscape.

When it rains, illegally dumped rubbish can impact proper drainage of run-off, making areas more susceptible to flooding when wastes block ravines, creeks, culverts and drainage basins.³

If run-off passes through illegally dumped rubbish, the health and ecology of our waterways may also be affected by contaminants.¹

Illegal dumping can pose serious health risks. Areas used for illegal dumping may be accessible to people, especially children, who are vulnerable to the physical and chemical hazards posed by waste.³

Rodents, insects and other vermin attracted to illegal dump sites may also pose health risks. Illegal dump sites with scrap tyres provide an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes which can carry diseases such as encephalitis.³

When illegal dumping takes place, the aesthetic value of local communities is diminished, often resulting in reduced property prices and loss of community pride.¹

Without the tax revenue that accompanies development, the funding available to establish and maintain effective illegal dumping prevention programs is limited.³

The only way to clean up an illegal dump site is to remove the rubbish and send it to landfill. This means that rubbish which could have been recycled is lost, and local councils are forced to bear the cost of the clean up.¹

Did you know?

- *A study of illegal dumping hot-spots in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong found that furniture accounted for 42% of illegally dumped rubbish.*⁴
- *On September 1 2005, the Environment Protection Authority closed the Fairburn Motor Sports Park in Canberra because of the illegal dumping of 1,600 tonnes of contaminated soil.*⁶
- *If an individual is found guilty of illegal dumping in court, they can face 7 years in jail and a \$250,000 fine.*²
- *The Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Squad of 8 councils in Western Sydney works day or night, seven days a week to tackle illegal dumping through surveillance, covert operations, helicopters and trail bike surveillance.*¹
- *Illegal Dumping costs ratepayers thousands of dollars per year. In 2005 it was revealed that residents of Gold Coast City Council paid a \$1.5 million clean-up bill, including costs of cleaning up illegal dumping.*⁷

Clean up - inspiring and working with all Australians to clean up, fix up and conserve our environment.

Illegal Dumping

Australian Authorities report that the level of illegal dumping has remained constant over the last five years.² What can you do to reduce illegal dumping?

What's Being Done About Illegal Dumping?

Many local councils around Australia have adopted a strategy including community education, clean-ups and regulatory enforcement to combat illegal dumping. While the strategy may vary depending on the extent of the problem and local conditions, it involves educating the community about the impacts of illegal dumping, warning of penalties and suggesting ways of disposing of unwanted materials.

Councils provide a variety of ways that residents can dispose of unwanted materials – through scheduled clean-ups, on-call clean ups and waste disposal facilities.²

Fines and notices for illegal dumping:

Although the penalties vary from state to state, Council Rangers have the ability to fine illegal dumpers.

Here are some examples of what you can be fined for illegal dumping under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 NSW:

- Littering: \$375 for individuals and \$750 for corporations.
- Unlawful transporting of waste (usual offence for roadside/ bushland dumping): \$1500 penalty notice for individuals and \$5000 for corporations.

If the matter goes to court the penalty can be much higher.

So What Can I do?

Always make sure you dispose of your rubbish responsibly. Find out from your local council when clean-ups will take place so you can put out your unwanted household items for collection. If a clean-up is not coming soon, check with your council to see if they will pick up your items on an on-call basis.

Waste disposal facilities are also available in most council areas.

Instead of throwing out unwanted items, try to recycle them so they can be turned into something new or used by someone else.

You can also educate your friends and family about illegal dumping and the negative impact it has on our environment.

Dob in a Dumper!

If you see an illegal dump site or see someone dumping rubbish, you can report it to your local council who will be able to investigate the matter further.

The kind of information your council will need to know includes:

- Street location of illegal dumping
- Types of dumped materials, whether you believe it constitutes a hazard.
- Date and time of dumping.
- Name and address of person(s) responsible.
- Associated vehicle, registration number(s).
- Photographs of the incident(s) may assist the prosecution.⁵



References

¹ **Blacktown City Council**
www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au

² **NSW Department of Environment and Conservation**
www.environment.nsw.gov.au

³ **United States Environment Protection Agency**
www.epa.gov

⁴ **Department of Environment and Heritage**
www.deh.gov.au

⁵ **Randwick City Council**
www.randwick.nsw.gov.au

⁶ **ABC News Online**
www.abc.net.au

⁷ **Gold Coast Sun**



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