Rhode Island Litter Task Force

Enforcement Survey

Members

Audubon Society of RI • Buckeye Brook Watershed Assn. • Clean Water Action • RI Assn. of Conservation Commissions • RI Dept. of Environmental Management • RI Food Dealers Assn. • Sierra Club of RI • Woonasquatucket River Watershed Assn.
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• The Enforcement Survey was sent to each of the 39 Rhode Island cities and towns

• 20 people responded from 11 communities

• Completed surveys came from 3 Departments of Public Works, a Conservation Commission Officer, 2 CEOs, 3 Police Chiefs and 2 Lieutenants, 2 Parks / Recreation Staff, a Zoning Official, a Building Official, an Engineer, a Town Planner and Councilor, The Warren Litter Committee and the DEM Fish and Wildlife Deputy Chief

• The following is a summation of their responses
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How would you describe littering in your community?

- 60% Major
- 20% Intermediate
- 10% Minor
- 10% Seasonal
- 0% Not a problem
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How would you describe illegal dumping in your community?

- 29% Not a problem
- 28% Seasonal
- 14% Minor
- 14% Intermediate
- 10% Major
- 5% Do not know

Pie chart showing the distribution of responses:
- Not a problem: 29%
- Seasonal: 28%
- Minor: 14%
- Intermediate: 14%
- Major: 10%
- Do not know: 5%
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How often do you cite people for littering / illegal dumping?

Frequency of Citations

- Very often: 0%
- Often: 0%
- Occasionally: 45%
- Never: 45%
- N/A or not my job: 10%
Mechanisms used to enforce anti-litter requirements:

- RI General Laws 37-15-7 and 2-15-7
- Zoning laws
- Tickets / fines
- Community service
- Some said there were none

Range of penalty

- Per RIGL
  - $200
- Community service / clean-ups
- Up to $500
- $100 a day / up to $100
- There is no penalty
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What mechanisms do you use to combat illegal dumping?

- Zoning laws
- Community service
- Court summons
- RITT for under 3 cubic yards / Superior Court for over 3 cubic yards

Range of penalty

- $500 - $5,000 per day and up to 5 years
- Up to $500
- Jail time up to 30 days
- Community service / clean-ups
- Tickets / fines
- Respond to complaints
- Up to $100
- Not specified
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How much money have you collected in fines from littering / illegal dumping in the past 2 years?

2001 $________

2002 $________

No one knows!
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What is the money from littering / illegal dumping used for?

- Application of Fines: 68%
- Litter Prevention / Clean Up Programs: 27%
- General Fund: 5%
- Do not know: 0%
- Do not receive any: 0%
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Do you have local ordinances that prohibit littering and illegal dumping?

![Pie chart showing]:

- **80%** Yes
- **10%** No
- **10%** Do not know
How familiar do you feel your officers are with state litter laws?

Familiarity with Litter Laws

- Very familiar: 25%
- Somewhat familiar: 25%
- Not familiar: 10%
- Do not know: 40%
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Does your city / town have a program where offenders clean up litter as part of a community service sentence?

Offender Clean-ups

- Yes, for litter / dumping violators only: 0%
- No: 50%
- Yes, for litter / dumping and other offenders: 28%
- Do not know: 22%
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Does your community have volunteer groups, either public or private, that conduct litter clean-ups?

Volunteer Clean-ups

- Yes: 80%
- No: 15%
- Do not know: 5%
- Also or only have paid workers: 0%
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Rate sources of litter in your municipality using the following rating scale: 0 = cannot rate (n/a) 1 = not a problem 2 = minor 3 = occasional 4 = seasonal 5 = major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast food</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soda, water, other containers</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotto tix</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bags</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarettes</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tire, car parts</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil, other auto fluid</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-out food containers</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points
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What do you believe are the biggest barriers in enforcing state and local litter laws?

**Bar Chart:**
- Don't dump in front of officials: 15
- Fines too high: 2
- Fines too low: 2
- Evidence too difficult to collect/store: 13
- Litter is minor compared to other violations: 10

**Other responses:**
Not enough manpower / money, people’s habits are hard to break, difficult to catch people littering in the woods, etc., zoning amendments may be necessary
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In what ways do you think the enforcement process can be improved?

- Occasional training sessions for police officers
- Empower other persons beside police to issue citations
- Charge businesses based on the litter they generate
- Education / Advertising / Public awareness
- Litter specific patrols / Night patrols
- More realistic / lower fines could allow for more citations
- Encourage the public to report violators
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How do you think we can motivate people to not litter the streets?

• Litter must be picked up immediately
• Education / Advertising / Public outreach (especially in schools)
• More offender clean-ups
• Get businesses involved
• More enforcement / Fines
• Encourage recycling / Monetary returns on containers
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Additional Comments:

“Litter pick up seems to get overlooked at every level of government. Oscar Program was a very effective tool that we have lost.”

“Dunkin Donuts should have a clean street campaign. Much litter on the side of the road is theirs. RI lottery should be held accountable.”

“Need to expand the plastic recycling, i.e. #3 and up. Provide more trash receptacles at area businesses.”

“The Tiverton Conservation Commission has [litter] as a priority on its current agenda.”