

# Facts About Cigarette Litter



- Locally, 25% of the Operation Downtown staff's time is contributed to cleaning up cigarette litter. That equals approximately \$9,000 each month totaling \$108,000 per year.
- In Des Moines, there is a \$100 fine for littering, which includes cigarette butts.
- Only 10% of cigarette butts are deposited in litter receptacles—the least likely item to be placed in a receptacle, which means 90% of cigarette butts are dropped on the ground and in our environment.
- Over 80% of smokers say they would place their butts in ash receptacles if suitable ones were available.
- Research shows that individuals who would never consider littering an aluminum can or piece of paper, do not consider cigarette butts litter. Smokers are not aware the cigarette butts are litter too.
- According to the Ocean Conservancy's Annual International Coastal Cleanup, communities across the country reported that cigarette butts were the most littered item, representing over 34% of the items collected.
- A 2003 Land & Underwater U.S. Cleanups list of Top 10 items found, cigarette butts and cigarette filters were the number one item collected at 1,426,613.
- About 95 % of cigarette filters are composed of cellulose acetate, a form of plastic which does not quickly degrade and can persist in the environment for years.
- About 18% of all litter, including cigarette butts, traveling primarily through storm water systems, ends up in local streams, rivers, and waterways.

**For more information contact Operation Downtown at 286-4950**