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You've seen it, but did you know that it is illegal? The City of Burleson is asking for your help in eliminating illegal dumping and unsightly littering in our streets, alleys, and other public right-of-ways as well as on private and commercial properties.

Illegal dumping is any unauthorized disposal of waste or unwanted materials on any public or private property. Illegal dumping often happens late at night to avoid detection. People usually dump illegally to avoid collection and disposal fees, or because they believe proper disposal is just "too much trouble."

Illegal dumping is a serious problem because:

- Illegal dumping is a community eyesore;
- When it is not addressed, illegal dump sites attract additional dumping;
- Decreases neighborhood property values;
- Cost taxpayers money in clean-up costs;
- Negatively impacts plant and wildlife;
- Poses safety hazard to people, especially children;
- Provides a breeding ground for disease carrying rodents, insects and vermin;
- Disrupts natural land and water process and ruins wildlife habitat;
- And, can clog storms drains and cause flooding.

The most common areas for dumping may include vacant properties; along roadside; commercial dumpster; abandoned industrial sites; along railroads; alleyways; secluded wooded areas, near creeks or lakes; and, near storm drains or other drainage inlets in neighborhoods.

What kinds of things are illegally dumped? Construction and demolition debris (drywall, shingles, lumber, bricks, concrete, siding); appliances; abandoned vehicles, automobile parts and tires; old, used, or soiled furniture; leaf, grass clippings and tree limbs; household garbage; medical waste; and, household hazardous waste products (cleaners, paint, motor oil, asbestos, etc.)

You can help by reporting illegal dumping. Call code enforcement at 817-426-9832; email code@burlesontx.com; or call the Burleson Police Department at 817-426-9903. To respond, code enforcement officers need:

- Date, time and location of the incident
- The vehicle license plate number and a detailed description of the vehicle involved
- A detailed description of the person involved

If you are caught illegally dumping, you could face anything from a Class C misdemeanor (five pounds or less or a volume of 5 gallons or less) up to a State Jail felony (1,000 pounds or more, has a volume of 200 cubic feet or more, or is disposed of for commercial purposes and weighs 200 pounds or more, has a volume of 200 cubic feet or more, or is contained in a closed barrel or drum).

If you are a City resident (pay a water/trash/recycling bill to the City), you have several options. With the Special Trash Collection, items are collected monthly, according to the zone collection schedule. To verify which zone you are in, you can call the Municipal Service Center at 817-426-9830.

Items that can be collected during the Special Trash Collection include limbs (not to exceed 4-feet in length); brush, lumber, wood; mattresses and furniture; carpet (cut into 4-foot rolls); regular kitchen appliances (Freon appliances must show it has been removed); large toys; lawn mowers/weed eaters (that have had the gasoline and oil drained); outdoor grills without the propane tank; yard waste in paper lawn bag; and other large bulk items.

You can be a curbside recycler. The City of Burleson contracts with Progressive Waste Solutions for curbside recycling. Recycling is collected once a week. All items must be placed in the City-approved green bins and placed at the curb by 7 a.m. on your recycling day. One bin is provided for each residence. Additional bins may be purchased for \$10 each. To order an additional bin, please call 817-426-9830 during regular business hours. Lids are available at the Service Center, 725 SE John Jones Dr., at no additional charge.

Did you know the City has a recycle and compost center? Residents are welcome to drop off recyclables or pick up free mulch at the Recycle and Compost Center, located at 610 Memorial Plaza, Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Come to our events! The City hosts household hazardous waste collection events twice a year. The 2015 Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Electronic Recycling and Paper Shredding events are Saturday, May 9, and Saturday, Nov. 7, 9 a.m.-11 a.m., at the City's old service center at 133 N. Main St. The events are only available to residents who live inside the Burleson city limits (proof of residency including a City water or solid waste bill is required).

If you are ready to get rid of your household hazardous waste, take advantage of the Environmental Collection Center, <http://fortworthtexas.gov/env/ecc/>, in Fort Worth. The ECC is open Thursdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is located at 6400 Bridge St. in Fort Worth. For directions, call 817-392-EASY (3279). There is no fee for dropping off your household hazardous waste, however, residents must take a City of Burleson water or solid waste bill as proof of residency. The ECC no longer accepts pharmaceuticals.