



Report Illegal Dumping



Scenic prairie landscapes. Hundreds of pristine lakes. Clean pure air. Cities and towns with parks and natural open spaces. These are just a few of the special treasures we experience living in Saskatchewan.

However, the natural beauty we enjoy in our province is threatened by two rising and illegal trends – private landfills and the open dumping of garbage or littering.

Unfortunately, we are probably familiar with seeing litter accumulate in parking lots and ditches, even when it is illegal to dispose of a simple coffee cup that way. Now, Ministry of Environment employees are seeing a growing new problem – more piles of waste on roadways and in ditches within a 10 to 20 kilometre radius of municipalities.

“One common issue we see is people trying to avoid landfill fees,” says Mike Rathwell, an environmental protection officer with the Ministry of Environment. “Some property owners will choose to dispose of waste, particularly from construction or the demolition of old buildings, unlawfully within municipalities or out in the country, causing further environmental concerns.”

Residents should also be aware that landowners are not allowed to accept waste generated off-site, and that permits are required to operate any landfill or transfer station, or for authorized industrial burn activities. Illegal or unauthorized burning can release toxins that affect air and water quality, human health and environmental health.

Individuals who leave garbage on the side of a road or in a clearing may face a fine of \$500 and a corporation may receive a fine of \$1,000. Landowners accepting or burning private waste can be fined under the Province’s environmental laws or required to do a costly cleanup.

Computer components, household trash, building supplies and bags of leaves and grass are just some of the commonly-discarded items. Illegal dumping or littering can quickly escalate from one or two bags of garbage to a much larger unsightly dump, as others using the same area discard their waste.

Random dumping poses a big problem, says Rich Hildebrand, a Prince-Albert based conservation officer with the Ministry of Environment.

“Old or broken appliances can leak chemicals that are hazardous to the environment, especially near water,” notes Hildebrand. “Plastics, such as grocery bags and pop can rings, do not break down and can

be dangerous for fish and wildlife. Even innocuous items, such as bags of branches and leaves, can become fire hazards.”

Discarded litter also poses the threat of unintentional or deliberately set fires, an illegal practice which carries with it potential threats to humans and the environment

Fortunately, many municipalities are stepping up to stem this growing threat. In 2016, the RM of Edenwold started returning garbage left on the side of quiet rural roads back to the offender, usually by finding a clear identifier such as a bank statement. In another case, a community safety officer-drove back the garbage to an address found within the refuse, creating much chagrin to the people who thought they would be receiving lost property instead of garbage. In other circumstances, people pay others to get their trash to the dump, but it doesn't always make it there.

There are some are simple solutions, such as keeping your garbage in the car until you can reach a garbage bin. Other education is more intensive, such as convincing illegal dumpers to use landfills instead.

“Many municipalities advertise special days or time periods when landfill access is free, so we encourage residents to take advantage of those opportunities,” adds Hildebrand, noting that many landfill charges in Saskatchewan are among the lowest in Canada.

The ministry also encourages municipalities to pass bylaws regarding waste disposal in their communities and to enforce the bylaw.

Many items that could easily be recycled, such as end-of-life electronics and used beverage cans, are also turning up in illegal dumps. There are a number of programs operating in Saskatchewan that collect and recycle products such as old tires, used batteries and electronics, compact florescent bulbs, oil and paint, plastic shopping bags, and construction and demolition materials. To see all of the province's recycling options, visit the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council's website (saskwastereduction.ca) to locate recycling resources in your community.

Through education and compliance, the Government of Saskatchewan is hoping to reduce the frequency of litter . . . and keep Saskatchewan beautiful for the future.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment

Inquiries

1-800-567-4224 (toll free in North America) or 306-787-2584

Centre.Inquiry@gov.sk.ca

saskatchewan.ca/environment

Turn in Poachers and Polluters

Report unlawful disposal or burning to TIP

1-800-667-7561 or #5555 from your SaskTel cellular

saskatchewan.ca/tip