

# Protecting Our Environment

## Cigarette Butts Are Litter, Too

(NAPSA)—Take a closer look at the sidewalks, streets or beaches in your community. You'll probably find thousands of pieces of cellulose acetate litter—cigarette butts—everywhere you look. Keep America Beautiful, Inc. (KAB), America's largest community improvement organization, wants that to change.

KAB's new "Guide to Cigarette Litter Prevention" CD-ROM can be ordered, free of charge, from [www.kab.org](http://www.kab.org). The project, many years in the making, was made possible through the ongoing support of Philip Morris USA.

Smokers who would probably never litter a coffee cup or candy wrapper habitually "flick" their cigarette butts. Many believe that butts are biodegradable, and because of their small size they may seem insignificant—almost invisible. But cellulose acetate takes many years to decompose. While one cigarette butt may be small, the combined impact of cigarette litter is staggering.

"Smoking bans have moved smokers outside, increasing the potential for cigarette litter," says G. Raymond Empson, Keep America Beautiful's president. At "transition points" in front of office buildings, restaurants, public transit and other places where smoking is illegal, the butts pile up by the thousands. Almost 20 percent of the litter found during KAB's community clean-ups is smoking-related.

Cigarette litter is costly, both to taxpayers and the environment. Lightweight cigarette butts are easily carried by rainwater runoff into city drainage systems, where they clog filters and cost millions of dollars annually to clean up. Butts also travel downstream to waterways, where they threaten wildlife and pollute lakes, beaches



**A new message for reducing litter.**

and shorelines.

The new "Guide" includes a step-by-step method for individuals, communities, businesses and local governments to follow in reducing cigarette litter. The steps to success include stricter enforcement of anti-litter laws, placing ash receptacles at "transition points," distributing pocket ashtrays to smokers, and increasing public awareness of cigarette litter dangers.

In pilot testing, the program reduced the rate of cigarette litter an average of 46 percent. That adds up to a lot of butts that won't become a costly eyesore. Harvey Hall, the mayor of Bakersfield, California, says that "the results were very encouraging, with a definite reduction in cigarette litter."

"Raising public awareness is critical," says Empson. "Everyone must understand that cigarette butts are harmful to the environment and community livability." The "Guide" includes a series of public service advertisements that can be placed in local publications or printed as posters for placement in restaurants, stores, bus shelters, train stations and other places where butts accumulate.

"We're providing the tools for anyone who wants them," says Empson. "We want every community in America to reduce cigarette litter."