

# LITTER IN AMERICA

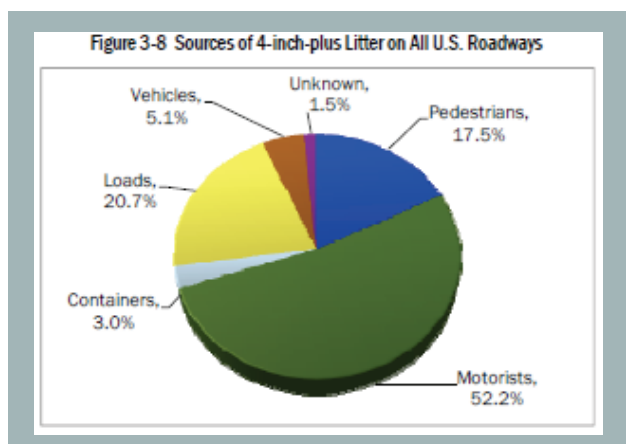
Results from the nation's largest litter study

## KEY FINDINGS: SOURCES OF LITTER

Keep America Beautiful's 2009 National Visible Litter Survey and Litter Cost Study\* identifies individuals as the primary source of litter. Motorists and pedestrians are littering on roads and highways, in downtown business districts, recreational areas, and beaches.

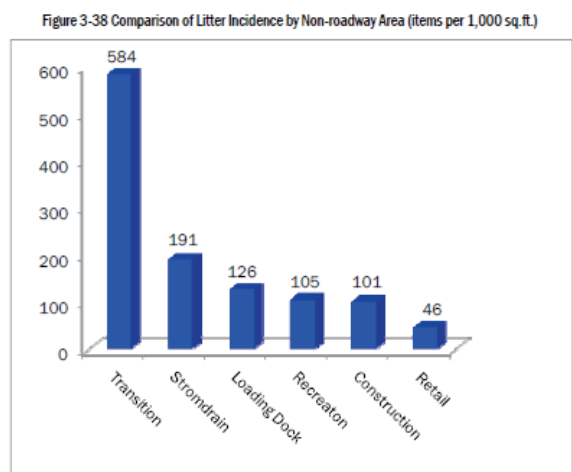
### LITTER ON ROADS AND HIGHWAYS IS THE RESULT OF INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS.

- **Motorists and pedestrians contribute a combined nearly 70% of litter over 4 inches.** Along roadways and highways, motorists generate 52.2% of litter and pedestrians 17.5%.
- **Motorists not properly securing truck or cargo loads, including collection vehicles, represent 20.7% of roadway litter 4 inches-plus.** Vehicle debris and improperly secured containers, dumpsters, trash cans or residential waste/recycling bins represent another 8.1% of litter over 4 inches.



### ALONG U.S. ROADWAYS CIGARETTE BUTTS, DISCARDED IMPROPERLY BY MOTORISTS AND PEDESTRIANS, ARE THE MOST FREQUENTLY IDENTIFIED ITEM.

- **Tobacco products comprise roughly 38% of ALL U.S. roadway litter** in overall aggregate analysis. Paper (22%) and plastic (19%) are the next largest percentages of litter on roads and highways.
- **Packaging litter comprises nearly 46% of litter 4 inches and greater.** This includes fast food, snack, tobacco, and other product packaging. And 61% of beverage containers 4 inches or greater on U.S. roadways are soft drink and beer containers.



**MORE ON REVERSE SIDE...**



\* The 2009 National Visible Litter Survey and Litter Cost Study was prepared by MidAtlantic Solid Waste Consultants for Keep America Beautiful, Inc. Research reports and an executive summary can be downloaded at [www.kab.org/research09](http://www.kab.org/research09). Keep America Beautiful, Inc. 2009 national litter and littering behavior research were conducted through a grant from Philip Morris USA, an Altria Company. Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company Foundation sponsored the creation of these fact sheets. All contents Copyright 2010 Keep America Beautiful, Inc. – [www.kab.org](http://www.kab.org). January 2010

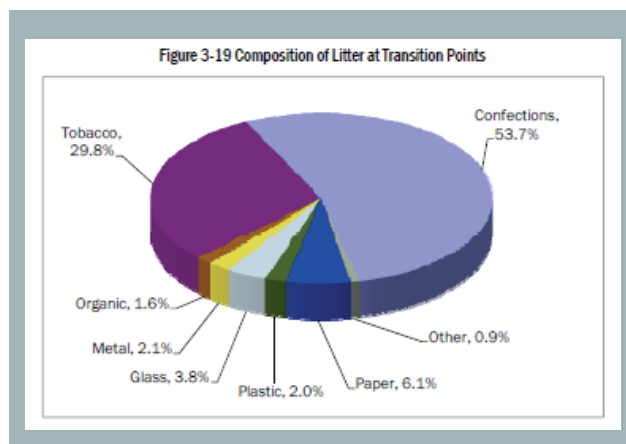
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## OFF THE ROADS, MOST LITTER IS IMPROPERLY DISCARDED AT "TRANSITION POINTS."

- About 95% of litter at transition points is from pedestrians. These are areas where individuals consuming a food or tobacco product are required to discard the product before entering.

- Virtually all litter—97%—found at transition areas are small items. Confection litter (candy, chocolate, gum, etc.) is the most predominant at 53.7%, and tobacco products second at 29.8%.



## STORM DRAINS, LOADING DOCKS, RECREATION AREAS, CONSTRUCTION SITES, AND RETAIL DISTRICTS ARE ALSO AREAS WHERE LITTER COLLECTS—MOSTLY SMALLER ITEMS LIKE CIGARETTE BUTTS, CONFECTION, AND PAPER.

- **After transition points, storm drains are the most littered.** Cigarette butts, confection, and other litter accumulate in or around storm drains, located primarily in gutters and designed to drain excess rain from paved streets, parking lots, etc.
- **85% of litter at loading docks is from workers loading and unloading goods.** Areas behind retail and other businesses are littered predominantly with cigarette butts, but also metals, plastic, and paper.
- **People litter both large and small items at recreational areas.** The source of most litter at parks, beaches, and open areas where people congregate for leisure activities is pedestrians—98.5%. Small items, which represent about half the litter, are cigarette butts and confection, while larger litter is most commonly food-related.
- **The primary source of litter at active residential and commercial construction sites is workers (69%).** They improperly dispose of trash from snacks, meals, smoking, etc. Most construction site litter is smaller items (93%), including cigarette butts, small pieces of paper, plastic, and confection.
- **High-traffic locations are a draw for a variety of items littered by shoppers.** Strip malls, shopping centers, and convenience stores all attract packaging litter, cigarette butts, and confection.

