



Frequently Asked Questions About Cigarette Butt Litter

Q What are cigarette butts actually made from?

A Most are from cellulose acetate, a form of treated wood pulp, surrounded by paper.

Q Do cigarette butts biodegrade?

A Yes – depending on the environmental conditions – within a period of between one or two months (i.e. in soil and water) and three years.

Q Why is cigarette butt litter a concern?

A Since the introduction of legislation banning indoor public place in 2004, smokers now have to congregate outside places of work, hospitality venues, train stations etc. As such, the prevalence of cigarette butt litter has increased.

Q What are the most effective measures to reduce the incidence of cigarette butt litter?

A Keep New Zealand Beautiful (KNZB) believes that education campaigns raising awareness of personal responsibility are the most effective litter abatement strategies.

Q Which local bodies have implemented cigarette butt litter programmes?

A At this point, the Wellington City Council and Auckland City Council have introduced cigarette butt litter programmes based on the KNZB approach.

Q How successful is the KNZB approach to cigarette butt litter?

A KNZB piloted the campaign in Wellington for eight weeks at the end of 2006 and saw a 30% drop in incidence of cigarette butts. To look at success from a different angle, the campaign implemented in Newmarket, Auckland, saw 100,000 butts collected in the first nine weeks.

Q What comments have been made about the programmes?

A Council workers who are responsible for ensuring footpaths and business areas are kept tidy welcomed the move and report a significant reduction in the number of cigarette butts dropped and therefore collected off the street.