

THINK GREEN NEWS

RECYCLE • REUSE • REDUCE • SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES AT UPSTATE

UPSTATE
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SUSTAINABLE SHARPS PROGRAM

Go ahead...drop 'em in.

It won't hurt you, the budget, or the environment!

In May 2014, the Department of Environmental Services implemented the Stericycle Sharps Management System. This reusable Sharps container program has multiple benefits – reducing cost, increasing safety with sharps handling, and preventing plastic from entering the landfill. With this program, rather than using a container one time, the containers are emptied, sanitized and reused up to 600 times. Use is tracked by a barcoding system. When it is time to remove the container from service, it is recycled. This program at Upstate alone will keep approximately 28,000 sharps containers out of the landfill each year. This initiative has also reduced overall costs of Sharps related expenses by 48% via a decrease in new container purchases and trash disposal fees.

The environmental impact in the first eight months alone is staggering...It is estimated that over 62,270 pounds of plastic have already been kept out of landfills from this program alone! This number represents 14,936 pounds of plastic generated at the UH Community Campus and 47,335 pounds from the UH Downtown Campus. Additionally, the program is estimated to have prevented the release of 32,966 pounds of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) in 2014. Lastly, the program supports the Upstate Strategic Plan sustainability goal of continuously increasing our recycling efforts.

MEDICINE BOTTLES FOR MALAWI

While first world nations throw away perfectly good medicine bottles, medical pharmacies and hospital facilities in Malawi often find themselves with nothing except torn pieces of paper in which to wrap medicine for their patients. This is often seen in rural hospitals and villages. You can help!

Save your containers. Place them in boiling water until you are able to remove the labels and the glue. Then box or bag them and send them to the *Malawi Project* for shipment to Malawi. It will help families in a third world country keep their medicines clean, out of reach of small children, and safe while they are being used.

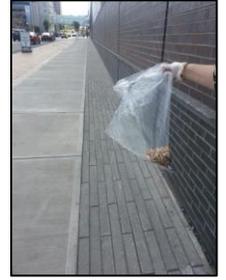


Mail to: Malawi Project Inc. 3314 Van Tassel Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46240 **More info:** [Click Here](#)



CIGARETTE BUTTS ARE LITTER, TOO.

In fact, cigarette butts are the most commonly discarded piece of waste worldwide. **It is estimated that 1.69 BILLION pounds of butts wind up as toxic trash each year. New York State alone produces 1.5 MILLION tons of cigarette butts annually.**



Cigarette butt litter creates environmental, health, and economic burdens.

CIGARETTE FILTER FACTS

- The core of most cigarette filters – the part that looks like white cotton – is actually a form of plastic called cellulose acetate. By itself, cellulose acetate is very slow to degrade in our environment. Depending on the conditions of the areas the cigarette butt is discarded in, it can take 18 MONTHS to 10 YEARS for the cigarette filter to decompose.
- Cellulose acetate is a plastic that can break into smaller pieces, but will never biodegrade or disappear. Instead it turns into a fine plastic powder that can remain in the ecosystem for years.
- Cigarette filters are designed to absorb some of the toxins in the cigarette smoke and collect solid particles known as tar.
- Chemicals are added to the cigarette paper to control the burn rate, and calcium carbonate is added as a whitener, in part to create an appealing ash as the cigarette burns.
- Most filters discarded also have bits of tobacco still attached to them.

CIGARETTE BUTT LITTER IMPACT ON:

ENVIRONMENT AND WATERWAYS

- Used cigarette filters are full of toxins, and those chemicals leach into the ground and waterways.
- Toxin-filled cigarette butts work their way into our waterways primarily through storm drains that dump into lakes and streams.



ANIMALS AND CHILDREN

- Cigarette filters are a threat to wildlife (birds, fish and other animals) that could ingest them, mistaking filters for food. They could choke, develop internal blockages, or be poisoned.
- Small children may eat them if they are within reach.

FIRES

- Discarded cigarette butts pose a significant threat in terms of fire. Every year, forest fires ravage vast areas, killing off wildlife and vegetation that takes years to return. According to the National Fire Protection Agency, upwards of 90,000 fires every year in the United States alone are caused by cigarettes.
- Cigarette-induced fires claim hundreds of lives in the US every year, and injure thousands more. Unintentional fires also cause millions of dollars of property damage yearly.

Article sources: No-Smoke.org and National Geographic and Cigarette Ingredients and Recycle Cig Waste