

Litter: It Costs You.
A Statewide Look at Litter Opinions

To better understand Georgians' attitudes and actions related to litter, the Litter Abatement and Prevention Task Force commissioned a statewide survey in Spring 2006.

Conducted by Responsive Management, a telephone survey of more than 1,000 Georgia residents and focus groups in Atlanta, Statesboro and Gainesville tested attitudes about litter. Below are some key research findings*.

Attitudes about litter:

- Ninety-four percent of those surveyed think litter is a problem in Georgia, with 77 percent considering litter a problem in their own communities.
- Approximately a third of Georgia residents think that most of the population litters.
- Ninety-seven percent of Georgians agree that litter hurts Georgia's environment. The same percentage believes that litter can be a health hazard.
- Ninety-one percent of respondents think that littering is a crime, although 72 percent think that those who litter are not at all likely to get caught or fined.
- When asked directly about litter, 87 percent of Georgia residents agree that litter affects their quality of life.

Littering behavior:

- Littering is most common among young males, 18–35 years old, who have an annual income of less than \$50,000.
- Almost half (47 percent) of Georgia residents say they know someone who has littered in the past two years.
- Forty-six percent of Georgia residents admit they have littered in the past, although 94 percent say they no longer or rarely litter.
- An overwhelming majority of Georgia residents (95 percent) think it is never acceptable to litter.
 - Of those who think it is acceptable, the most common reasons are having no trash receptacles nearby or when what is thrown out is biodegradable.

- The majority of Georgia residents (59 percent) think people litter because they are lazy. The next most popular answer (19 percent) was that people litter because they don't care about the impacts of their actions.

Part of the solution:

- More than 23 percent of Georgians have participated in an organized clean-up effort in the past two years (e.g., Adopt-A-Highway, Rivers Alive, etc.)
- A substantial percentage (43 percent) of Georgia residents feel that people who litter should be responsible for cleaning up litter.

* Margin of error: +/- 3.09 percentage points