

Why do you let people dump garbage on my road?

Your County Engineer spends more time than he would like on this one! We don't like illegal dumping any more than you do! We work closely with Environmental Health and the Solid Waste department to try to deal with it. However we have little control over people who are determined to illegally dump. And they avoid the disposal cost that the vast majority of us accept.

Several times a year road crews pick up garbage on the road right-of-way. They then dispose of it correctly. Yes, we have to pay the disposal fee from county road funds. In many counties there may also be crews of juvenile detainees or low risk convicts that perform litter pick-up. They do this as community service to meet sentencing requirements. And yes, we still pay the disposal fee. The disposal fee must always be paid because Solid Waste operations are paid only from fees, not property taxes.

It is a difficult to stop illegal dumping. But we can all do our part by reporting it to local law enforcement and the solid waste department. Changing or affecting someone's chosen behavior is difficult. Quick reporting with as much detail as you can get will help. One indicator is higher than normal traffic into a remote area.

It is hard to prosecute illegal dumping because it is often hard to show that a particular person actually did the deed. But to stop this we must be willing to continue to report offenders. The more information you can give in a report the better. Try to get descriptions of the people, the vehicles, and the day and time. A license plate number helps a lot. Contact your County Engineer, County Sheriff, or Solid Waste department for more on how you can help.

Derek Pohle, P.E., County Engineer
Grant County

Questions about this article, or any of the series, or on other topics related to County Roads, may be directed either to your County Engineer, or to Al King, P.E., County Road Administration Board, Olympia, at Al@CRAB.Wa.Gov.