

Litter and It Will Hurt

Facts

- Roughly 40 percent of litter on highways comes from unsecured loads.
- It is estimated that road litter causes 25,000 accidents in North America each year, nearly 100 of which are fatal.
- Every year, road debris causes about 400 accidents on Washington State highways.
- 40 percent of the litter-related violations issued by Washington State Patrol in 2007 were for a failure to secure a load; 21 percent were issued for debris escaping from those loads.
- More than 12 million pounds of litter comes from vehicles each year in Washington State.

Washington State Fines

- \$216 fine for transporting an unsecured load.
- Up to \$5,000 fine with potential for jail time if an item falls off the vehicle and causes property damage or bodily injury.
- \$103 fine for a small thing like a piece of paper. Up to \$5,000 for bigger items such as furniture.

How to properly secure your load:

- **Tie down.** Use rope, bungee cords, netting or straps. Tie larger items directly to your vehicle.
- **Lighter goes lower.** Put lighter items at the bottom of the load, and weigh them down so they don't blow out.
- **Don't overload.** Keep material level with truck bed or trailer unless tied down, netted, or tarped.
- **Double-check.** Always double-check your load. Ask yourself, "Would I feel safe driving behind my vehicle? If the answer is, "No," then you need to do a better job of securing your load.

Materials to secure your load:

Tarps, netting, rope, straps, chains, bungee cords, cargo bar, and blocking and bracing materials.

Who to Call

If an item falls off a vehicle and endangers public safety: Call 911 immediately.

If an item has not been properly secured and has the potential to fall off a load, call 866-LITTER-1 (866-548-8371).



Contact information:

Litter Programs
360-407-6900
litter1@ecy.wa.gov
www.litter.wa.gov/secure

Special accommodations:

To get this version for the visually impaired call the Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program at 360-407-6900. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.