

## 1. What Is Waste?

A bottle of orange juice is useful at first - especially if you're thirsty! But once you've finished the juice, the bottle is superfluous (no longer needed) and you throw it away. That bottle is waste (rubbish) but believe it or not, it costs a fortune to deal with waste.

**Waste has to be collected and taken to landfill sites.  
Landfill sites, in turn, are expensive to manage,  
use up valuable land and fill up very quickly.**

### So, What Can I Do?

#### Try to create less waste:

Reduce – Buy less or buy more cleverly (like refills, bulk goods or returnable 2-litre bottles instead of 6-packs).

#### Try to reduce existing waste:

Re-use – If you have no further use for goods, find someone who does. Many charities welcome donations of old clothes, furniture, toys or books.

Repair – Fix broken items rather than discarding them.

Recycle – Separate waste into glass, tin cans, paper, cardboard and plastic

#### Try to handle what is left correctly:

- Keep your dustbin in the shade to prevent smells and pests
- Put your bin or bags out early on collection day and not the night before
- Put your bin or bags out where labourers can see them
- If you use bags, tie them firmly to avoid spillage (leaking)
- Don't overfill them – they may burst
- Wrap sharp objects in newspaper to prevent bags from tearing or injuries to labourers
- Use kitchen waste to start a compost heap

## 2. What Is Litter?

When waste is handled correctly, it's part of the formal waste stream. When it's handled incorrectly and ends up on streets and in fields, it's called litter.

Litter is a serious problem throughout the world; in fact, it can cost up to 10 times more to pick up litter than to collect waste from our homes. In addition, litter can cause pollution, be a health and fire hazard, harm animals and affect the appearance of neighbourhoods.

Litter comes from 10 main sources: motorists and passengers; pedestrians; crowd venues like concerts; mass transportation situations like taxi ranks; the lack of proper waste collection services; incorrect waste-handling

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by commercial and industrial sectors; incorrect waste-handling at home; construction and demolition sites; loading and unloading areas; and uncovered trucks.

What's worse, litter can be moved away from the point at which it is created by wind, water, traffic or animals - and end up all over the place!

### Why Do People Litter?

People litter for many reasons, ranging from laziness and carelessness, to a lack of awareness or not enough dustbins. There are 3 situations in which some people feel it's acceptable to litter: where litter has already accumulated, where people feel no sense of pride or ownership or where litter is cleaned up by someone else.

**South Africa already has a high recycling rate, recycling an average of 43% of our paper, metals, plastics and glass. But this is partly driven by poverty. Thousands of informal waste collectors pick through suburban garbage every morning, squeezing out a living by removing and re-selling the glass, newspapers and cardboard that we toss into our black bags. Let's make it a little easier for them, for ourselves and for the environment!**

### Solutions To The Litter Problem

Changing a habit like littering begins with each of us. We must accept responsibility for our actions and influence the actions of others around us in the home, at school and in the community. By demonstrating proper waste disposal, we'll cause others to consider their actions too. So let's set an example for others - especially coworkers, friends and children - by using bins and not littering. Let's make that tiny bit of extra effort! Information courtesy of PIKITUP Johannesburg (Pty) Ltd Tel: (011) 712 5200 [Web: www.pikitup.co.za](http://www.pikitup.co.za)

### So what can I do to protect the environment?

- Learn to correctly handle waste. Avoid littering. Recycle!
- Reduce the use of paper at home and at school, by re-using and recycling
- Travel in lift-schemes or car pools
- Plan outings, like hikes or picnics, to get closer to nature and appreciate its great value
- Never feed wild animals
- Be very, very careful with fire outdoors
- Never pick flowers or remove tree branches from public areas or parks
- Plant indigenous (local) trees and plants in your garden

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### 3. Recycling

Okay, so you've started carrying plastic shopping bags around and feel you deserve a pat on the back. You're doing your part for the environment and you can sleep easy, right? Wrong. Recycling household waste is the next step and if you're not doing it yet, you need to make a little more effort.

#### How?

It's so easy! Households need to separate their waste into only 2 types: recyclable and nonrecyclable. Whether this means using a twin bin (with separate compartments for recyclables and non-recyclables), separate bins or simply collecting glass bottles in a cupboard is up to you. And when you have enough glass, paper, cans or plastic separated and ready for recycling, there are several ways to get it done:

Many people also pass recyclable goods on to schools, which earn money by running recycling competitions among pupils and reselling the waste collected.

Information courtesy of YOU Magazine

- Locate buyback centres if you want to be paid for recycling
- Phone the National Recycling Forum on (011) 782 3503
- Phone Mondi on 0800 022 112 or visit [www.paperpickup.co.za](http://www.paperpickup.co.za)
- Phone Collect-A-Can on (011) 466 2939 or visit [www.collectacan.co.za](http://www.collectacan.co.za)
- Phone the Plastics Federation on (011) 314 4021 or visit [www.plasticsinfo.co.za](http://www.plasticsinfo.co.za)
- Phone Enviroglass on (011) 824 6047 or (021) 951 7363

### 4. The Environment

Every day vehicles and factories pump gases into the atmosphere, causing the world to heat up. And forests, the lungs of the earth, are cut down to make paper, drill oil wells, farm cattle, build mines and construct roads. This leads to the melting of ice sheets, the raising of sea levels and the flooding of communities; also posing danger to the hundreds and hundreds of plants that can help us fight illness. At the same time, today's world is faced with an upsurge of diseases such as malaria and an increase in extreme weather conditions like tornadoes and floods.

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